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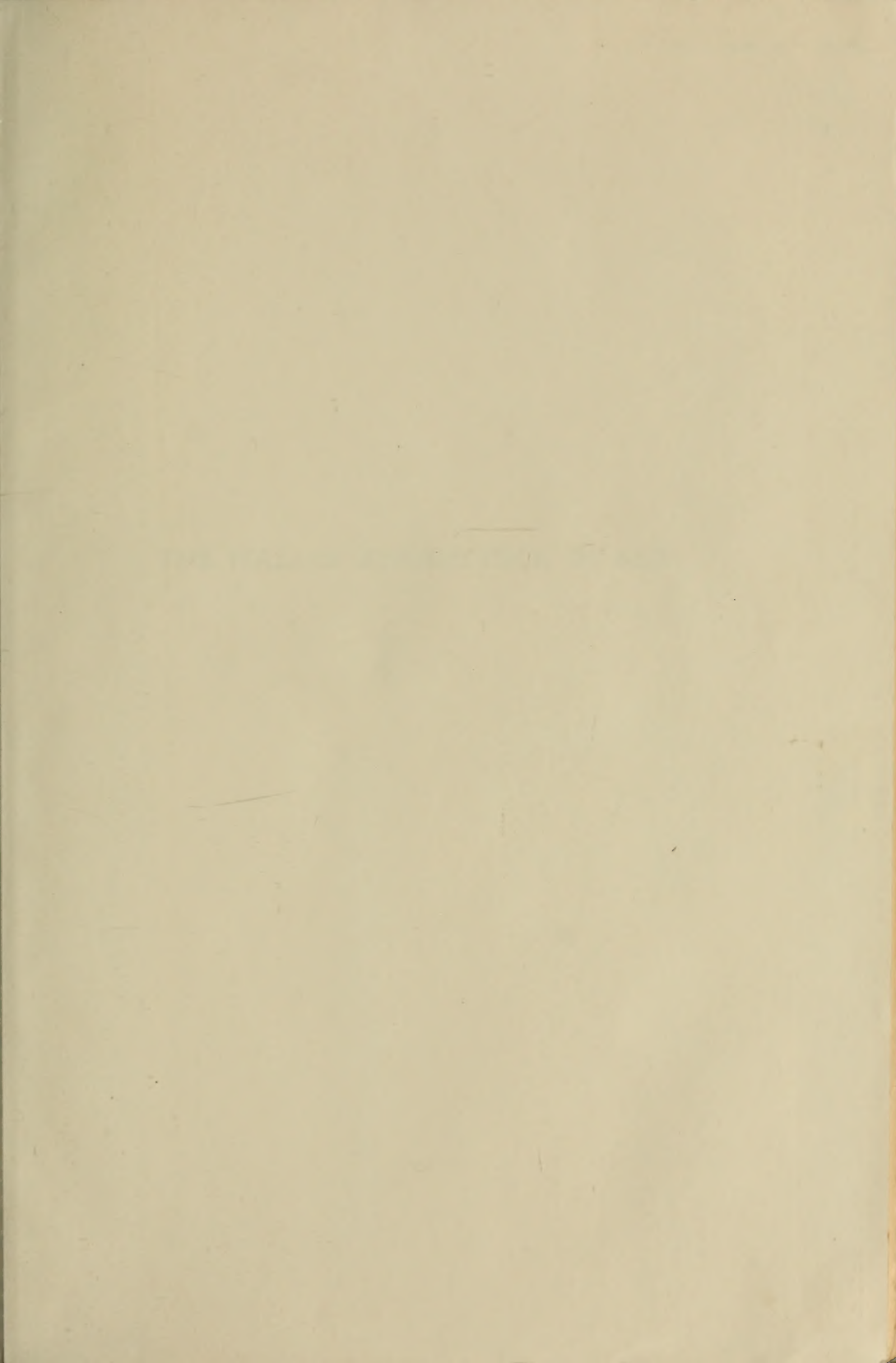
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THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



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PALMA VECCHIO: SANTA BARBARA



THE  
ITALIAN RENAISSANCE  
IN ART

A STUDY IN APPRECIATION

OTHO PEARRE FAIRFIELD, LITT. D.



1928

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
NEW YORK

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TO  
JUDSON G. ROSEBUSH





## FOREWORD

THIS book has been written for students both in and out of school who bring to the study of art no technical knowledge and little practice in its interpretation, but who feel that they would like to be introduced to what others have found a great treasury of satisfaction. It has grown up with the demands of the author's classes for a compact statement and a blazed trail. There are many books of profound erudition on biography, attributions, criticism, but the beginner is likely to be discouraged by the very wealth of material and its authoritative quality. The goal of appreciation is not reached.

The book is written in the firm belief that appreciation is the goal of study for the average man, and that real appreciation is possible without any professional knowledge of any of the fine arts. Literature certainly is appreciated by a public that does not write. Music is a never-ending delight to many who never have written any, and perchance have never learned to play any instrument. The other arts are no more mysterious. Indeed art without an appreciative public, even tho uninitiated, would soon cease to be.

The discussion will show scant sympathy with the dictum, "Art for Art's Sake". Art that endures never did, and never will, exist for its own sake. Whatever exists for its own sake is petty rather than

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great; ephemeral, not for all time; individual rather than Universal. Art is always more than the laying of color, the chiseling of marble, the mechanics and the processes however interesting they may be. The artist who strives only for excellence herein will easily be surpassed and forgotten by the generations that follow. Men, both of yesterday and of today, have been caught in this eddy of petty ideals while the river of art sweeps by toward ever widening reaches and the far distant ocean.

Great art is more than sensuous impressions on delicate nerve and mysterious brain. Lines may whirl and pause and stiffen; light may play hide and seek with shadow; color may mount into the brilliance of the rainbow or die away into the soft grays of twilight; but the creator of these, if he is a great soul, has ever been unwilling to rest with such achievement. With form and color, or tones, or words, he wills to build, out of what is, that which was and ever shall be. Thru that which changes and perishes, he reveals the imperishable.

To find this spirit and such men in the Italian Renaissance, to explain their presence, and interpret their work at its best, is the purpose of the following chapters.

In harmony with this general purpose, the treatment of the mechanics of art is reduced to the minimum; disputes over points of history and attribution have been almost completely eliminated; and great emphasis laid upon direct contact with art itself, and its interpretation and appreciation.

The material for these studies has been gathered



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from many sources, great and small, the chief of which is first hand contact with the originals. There are but few examples used that have not been studied several times in their thought-provoking presence. The interpretations expressed are, in most instances no doubt, similar to those of other writers. In so far as one discovers the Universal in a bit of nature or art, he must be in agreement with those who have discovered the same thing. Naturally, however, the emphasis will be different, the point of view changed, and the arrangement of material ordered with a different purpose. The studies here made may be characterized as the refining of old material rather than the development of new ore fields.

Lawrence College,  
January, 1928.



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PART I  
THE AWAKENING





## THE COMING OF THE NEW DAY

**I**TALY has been the home of two great civilizations. The first was the imperial Roman that brought the barbarians under law and welded them to the city of the seven hills by broad, well-constructed roads that solved communication and transportation efficiently for that time. The second was the flowering of the Christian church that reached full bloom about the year 1500. This latter culture, for want of a better name, has been called the Renaissance, and is the theme of the following chapters.

In the later days of the Roman civilization, Christianity became the state religion, but Constantine moved the capital away from old Rome to Byzantium, and changed the name of the city to Constantinople. For many centuries the church and empire in the East prospered, while Italy was plundered by the Northern Barbarians. The church in western Europe naturally turned more and more to the Bishop of Rome as the only head of the church and strengthened his consistent claim that he was superior to the patriarchs of the Eastern church on the ground that he was the successor of St. Peter. When Charlemagne recognized this claim and put behind the pope the power of his new western empire, he gave a tremendous impetus to the development of a great church civilization in Italy and the North.

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But this union of church and state did not progress smoothly. On the one hand, the state sought to control the appointment of church officials, and to make their powers subordinate to the state and a buttress for it. On the other, church officials, both great and small, meddled in the selection of officials of the state, befriended malcontents in some cases, and crushed them with excommunication in others, and made uneasy the head that wore the crown when it failed to obey the behests of the church. As the church grew richer in lands and prestige, the clashes became more frequent and bitter.

When the pope was strong and sincere, as was Gregory VII, and the emperor was strong and scheming, as was Henry IV, the quarrel was long and sharp. Henry was defiant, but at last he was compelled to wait in the snow at Canossa until the pope pleased to receive and pardon him. Frederick Barbarossa was another conspicuous instance of an emperor who defied the pope and was compelled to yield. In a very picturesque but humiliating way, he bowed his neck to the actual papal foot in the vestibule of St. Mark's at Venice. Finally Innocent III and Innocent IV crushed the power of the emperor in Italy and brought the Hohenstaufen line to an end in 1254. So completely was the emperor's power broken that there was no emperor of the Holy Roman Empire for a generation.

These long quarrels between the popes and the emperors had most important effects upon the life of Italy. Germany lost control of the course of Italian history, and herself split up into a number of petty

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states that reached unity again in 1871. Italy gained much in various phases of freedom tho she carried on the old strife in the form of internal dissension between the parties of the Guelfs and Ghibellines. The cities that had been hampered by governmental restrictions and taxes became free to lay their own taxes and develop their industries according to their needs, tho this statement applies rather to North Italy than to the States of the Church and the kingdom of Sicily. In those free cities of the North, particularly in the provinces of Tuscany, Lombardy, and Venice, art reaches its earliest maturity and its greatest development.

While the papacy was gaining in power in its conflict with the empire, there were many movements to correct abuses in the church, to root out simony, to curb heresy, and to raise the ideals of human conduct. These religious reforms are of special interest in the thirteenth century when the two great orders of mendicant friars were founded, the Franciscans and the Dominicans.

The Franciscan order sought higher ideals by a simple acceptance of the example and teaching of Jesus. Francis of Assisi the founder was born of rich parentage and lived a life of ease until a severe illness brought him serious thought about the meaning of life. Then he cast aside his wealth and position and became the first of "the penitents of Assisi". Friends joined him, papal sanction gave the order recognition, and missionaries spread everywhere the call to "poverty, chastity, and obedience". His beautiful life inspired Giotto to his best work, and



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his figure is common among the saints of the later painters.

Dominic was a Spaniard and a scholar who was shocked by the prevalence of heresy in Southern France and who determined to devote his life to the salvation of men by the teaching and preaching of sound doctrine. He gathered about him a body of men of like mind, and the order known as the "Friars Preachers" was founded. In the changing world of the thirteenth century, the Dominicans found an important place, building great churches and strongly influencing the development of thought and art.

Monasticism in all its forms, of course, affected the coming of the Renaissance, but these two orders are noted as being more immediately interesting.

The increasing power of the popes and the growing consciousness of the church set going another train of events that had tremendous influence upon the direction and content of the freedom and power wrested from the emperor.

In 1076 Jerusalem was captured by the Turks from the Saracens. The Turks, wild warriors, religious fanatics, were not interested in the culture of the Saracens tho professing the same religion. The Saracens had rather cultivated the pilgrimages of the Christians as a source of gain, but the Turks were vigorously intolerant. The persecution of the pilgrims which followed melted the indifference of Christendom toward its chief shrine, and a great wave of religious enthusiasm swept over Europe. With the pope as leader, the Crusades began.

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The first crusade resulted in the organization of four Latin states on the eastern Mediterranean shore. For a time they were able to hold back the enemy. When Edessa was finally lost, a second crusade was organized by Emperor Conrad and the king of France, 1147. When Saladin captured Jerusalem, a third was organized, 1187, by Frederick Barbarossa, Philip II of France, and Richard the Lion-hearted. The fourth became a war upon Constantinople, at the behest of the Venetians, who furnished the ships for the crusade. Other expeditions followed, notably under St. Louis of France, but by 1300 crusading enthusiasm cooled while the Turks pushed steadily on. The Eastern Christian Empire fell entirely under their sway by the capture of Constantinople in 1453.

The effects of the Crusades upon Italy were far-reaching. Western Christians were introduced to industries and comforts of which they had not dreamed, and they came back with a desire to possess and enjoy. A thriving commerce sprang up between East and West. Spices and silks were imported by way of Pisa, Genoa, and Venice. Banks and bankers arose to answer the needs of exchange, and the Bardi and Peruzzi families of Florence planted banks in the chief marts of trade.

Industries arose at home. Metal workers and cloth-weavers grew in number and skill. Armor makers and goldsmiths, fullers, dyers, and weavers united against unjust taxes, and restricted competition by forming trade guilds that came to control the economic policy of cities and states. The people



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rapidly passed from coarse clothing and cheerless homes to prosperity, paved streets, and cities that were marvels of beauty to their northern visitors.

A new social and religious life followed. Guilds and bankers, churches and princes, took pride in city halls, guild halls, monasteries and churches. A pulsing community spirit was born in the free cities, and expressed itself in civic art and architecture. The barren interiors of churches and palaces warmed into wall paintings, and were graced with hangings and furniture that continually grew in abundance and beauty.

The influence of the Crusades did not stop with commerce and increased wealth. It is possible to have silks and metals, guilds and city halls, and have them ugly, barbaric. They alone cannot bring the reign of art. The spirit of man must be awakened, grow dissatisfied with the world that is, and wander out into the unknown. He must be a creator if he would be an artist.

The heresies that distressed St. Dominic and the longing by St. Francis for the simple life of poverty, chastity and obedience were perfectly normal in a day of rapidly changing outlook and vigorous ideals. Heresies in religion come only with heresies in general knowledge. What was accepted as truth in science and the arts was brought into question by contact with the rich Arab culture in the East. A revolution in medicine was brought about by the translation of medical treatises of the Arabs and the Greeks. Tho of course the actual achievement was small, the changed attitude of mind was power-

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ful for progress. An Arab compiled for Roger the Norman the best geography the world had known up to the twelfth century. Merchants penetrated into the unknown interior of Asia, and sailors traversed the mysterious ocean as far as the Azores one hundred fifty years before Columbus. Algebra came from the Arabs to enrich western mathematics, and alchemy from the same source to make the beginnings of chemistry. Arabic numerals took the place of the more clumsy Roman.

Perhaps because of Arab interest in Aristotle, his works were translated into Latin and his ideas gave a new impetus to all intellectual pursuits. Mutual enthusiasm brought men together for further study, and universities followed. Bologna was important for its School of Jurisprudence as early as 1088. Padua founded a university in 1222.

It is but a step from the founding of centers of learning to the rise of a literature, written in the language of the "man in the street". Dante is the dominant figure in the early literature of Italy, and is still counted among the world's greatest in poetry. Petrarch, slightly later, expressed the interest of the people in their Roman past, and counted it the greatest honor of his life when he was crowned with the laurel wreath of old Rome among the ruins of the Capitoline Hill. Boccaccio, his friend and contemporary, was a voluminous writer and the author of a series of tales that inspired Chaucer to write his stories of the Canterbury pilgrims.

In this tingling, vibrant atmosphere the other arts were born. Of course they were Christian. Their

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very birth was predicated on the rising glory of Christianity as manifested in church, city, and nation. Their whole purpose was to celebrate its story, dignify its worship, and beautify its shrines.

Architecture is always the first of the major arts to waken; it is needed first. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries Christian churches were built in a modified form of the old Roman style, called Romanesque. In northern churches the arch was sustained by massive piers as at Durham in England, and by old Roman columns in Italy where Roman remains were accessible. Probably the finest example of the Romanesque in Italy is the cathedral group at Pisa.

Toward the end of the twelfth century, the church builders of France were fairly aflame with the enthusiasm of the Christian and Community Spirit, and the result was the Gothic cathedrals. Those rather crude northern communities never did anything finer than to work together under the lead of their bishops in building those sky-reaching cathedrals that have never been surpassed as manifestations of the religious spirit in stone. The Italians, notwithstanding their boasted culture and their scorn for this style of architecture, have nothing to show in the period from 1200 to 1500 that is at all comparable with the grandeur of the Gothic.

The painting and sculpture are born later; they too rise to satisfy Christian demands. Their beginnings will be noted in Chapters II and III.

And now shall we say that the Awakening is part of Medieval history or is it the beginning of the



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Renaissance? It is but natural to classify, and it is also serviceable to divide the course of events into periods and give them names; but in this case, whatever names we give must not blind us to the fact that there is no break at 1300. Christian inspiration reached its climax in architecture when it embodied itself in the Gothic cathedral from 1200 to 1500. In Italian literature it came to full bloom in the *Divina Commedia* a little after 1300. In Italian painting and sculpture, it did not reach its Golden Age until two hundred years later in the work of the early sixteenth century. But painting and sculpture had the same mighty urge behind them as the cathedrals. The whole movement in Italy from 1000 quite through to 1600 is the flowering and fading of Christianity, a continuous movement however we may divide it into periods.

It is not intended to say that Christianity was dead at this latter time, but it was at the end of a season, a cycle of enthusiasm. The Christian ideals of the Middle Ages had lacked many elements necessary to the "abundant life" that Jesus sought to bring, and the process of freeing the human spirit demanded that the old should die; that man should relate himself more closely to the material world and make it a comfortable home for a free spirit. In the multiplied and complex interests that engaged the attention and enthusiasm of men as nature and classical culture revealed their treasures, Christian ideas and institutions ceased to dominate. Men no longer made the way of the church the only highway of life. They sought success in merchandising, ex-

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ploration, political preferment, and the various avenues of secular life. And with the decadence of the great Christian enthusiasm that had inspired them, the arts, one after another, lost their vitality. By 1600 twilight had come again in Italy.



## CHAPTER I

### THE GREAT CENTERS AND THEIR EARLY ARCHITECTURE

THE stir of the new life was felt in widely varying measure by different parts of Italy, and the contribution to art varied accordingly. Southern Italy offered nothing of first importance. Rome would naturally be expected, as the seat of the papacy, to make a great contribution, but a moment's review of history will remind us that political and ecclesiastical anarchy reigned in Rome during the fourteenth century and a part of the fifteenth. The popes left Rome in the year 1309 for the "seventy years captivity" at Avignon, and the population was reduced to 20,000. Then came the church schism, successive church councils, so that it was near the middle of the fifteenth century before the popes began to repair the damaged churches and palaces with the contributions that once more filled the papal treasury. A little after 1500, the city absorbed much of the energies of the Renaissance, but with its early manifestations Rome had nothing to do.

The story is very different in the province of Tuscany. She had been, body and soul, in the great movements that were stirring Italy, and was bubbling over with vigor. Indeed, it is scarcely exaggerating to say that she was the life of the movement, and of

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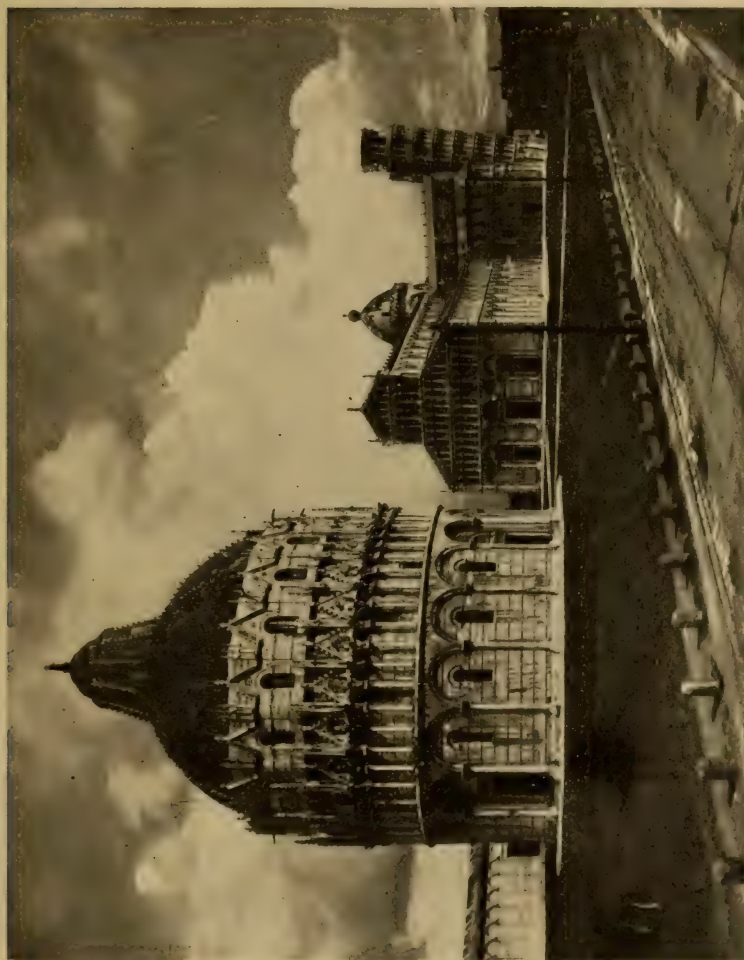
course got her reward in the blooming of a culture of which the world is deservedly proud. The three great centers of Tuscan art life were Pisa, Florence, and Siena.

Pisa rises into prominence in the eleventh century as a sturdy opponent of the Saracens, who were pushing their conquests into Sicily and Southern Italy. Her trade was very important, and her warehouses and consuls were found in many cities of the eastern Mediterranean. Her power became so great that, in 1137, she pillaged Amalfi, one of her important commercial rivals. With the fall of the Hohenstaufens, Pisa began to decline, for she was Ghibelline in politics. Genoa destroyed her fleet, usurped her trade, and took part of her foreign possessions. Florence was only fifty miles away, up the river Arno and shut her off from inland trade. In 1405, she became subject to Florence through purchase, and was never again strong enough to assert her independence.

Her contribution to Italian culture was made chiefly in the twelfth century when she erected one of the most distinctive church groups in the whole peninsula. This is composed of the Cathedral, Baptistery, Campanile, and Campo Santo.

The earliest of these buildings is the Cathedral, begun in 1118, under the spell of Pisan victories over the infidel Saracens, and with the spoils that were brought back. The building is Romanesque, with two features that deserve notice. One is the open gallery, in four stories, that adorns the front. A comparison of this with other important Romanesque fronts will show how much finer feeling for light and

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CATHEDRAL GROUP, PISA

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shade these Pisans have than other architects of their time. The other unique element is the dome, a timid form that cowers low in its supporting drum, but the precursor of the many that culminated in St. Peter's at Rome.

The Baptistry was begun in 1152. When Gothic became the fashion, decorative canopies in the pointed style were added to the round-arched windows. The shape is circular, terminating in a rounded dome, through which the conical dome of the interior projects.

The Campanile has given Pisa its greatest fame in modern times; for it is a leaning tower, about one hundred eighty feet high, and fourteen feet out of perpendicular. Even so, it contains the cathedral bells, whose continued ringing throughout the centuries seems not to have disturbed the stability of the structure, tho one of the bells weighs over six tons.

The Campo Santo, or cemetery, is a great open court, surrounded by a cloister in the Gothic style. The cloister wall is covered with frescoes, the work of a later time. The court was filled with more than fifty shiploads of earth from Palestine, in order that the dead might lie in sacred ground.

Florence rose into prominence in the twelfth century through its commercial and industrial activities. It was the first city of Italy to put its coinage on a gold basis, and the survival of the name florin as a money unit, to our own time and in far away England, is testimony to the soundness of its financial and monetary principles in those early days. Industry and guilds were so powerful in the political



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THE SKY-LINE OF FLORENCE



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life of this period that the poorer nobles were compelled to enter the guilds in order to retain their political influence. Aristocracy rapidly changed its basis from one of birth to one of wealth.

About 1300, this financial prosperity, new political freedom, and religious enthusiasm started towers and domes that still dominate the sky-line of the city.

The oldest of the church buildings is the Baptistry, founded as early, probably, as the eighth century, but brought into its present form in the thirteenth. The octagonal exterior hardly prepares one for the fine dome of the interior. No doubt the designer was much indebted to the Pantheon at Rome, and in turn his design became an inspiration for Brunelleschi and the beautiful dome of the cathedral.

The Cathedral was decreed in 1294, and begun by Arnolfo del Cambio, the first great architect at Florence; but as its most distinctive features belong to a later period, the discussion of it belongs to a later chapter.

The Campanile was begun by Giotto in 1334, and continued by Andrea Pisano and Talenti. It is two hundred seventy-six feet in height, so divided into stories and so decorated that it gains in the impression of lightness as it rises, tho the external dimensions remain the same. One should observe how much of this is due to the varying size of the windows, and the increasing delicacy and multiplicity of decoration. The colored marble facing shows more refinement than most of the façades of Tuscany of this time. At a comparatively short distance, the colors blend into a very charming effect.

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Or San Michele is in no sense a beautiful building, but it has a most suggestive story. In 1284, Arnolfo built a loggia for a grain market. On one of the



THE CATHEDRAL GROUP, FLORENCE

pillars, an image of the Madonna was placed, which, to the simple-minded folk, soon came to have miraculous powers of healing. When the loggia was rebuilt after a fire, Orcagna was commissioned to make a tabernacle to hold this miracle-working picture;

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but the shrine was so much frequented and so interfered with business, that the grain merchants were compelled to vacate. Walls were built between the pillars, and the enclosed space became a church. Niches were made in the outer walls, and the different guilds filled them with sculpture. The religious spirit was young and strong.

Santa Maria Novella is one of the earliest Dominican churches and was intended to give the order prestige in an important center of learning. The veneer is of dark and white marble, which gives a rather garish effect in the Italian sunshine. The interior has been called "the purest and most elegant example of Tuscan Gothic". The most beautiful and most interesting part of the building is the chapter house, called the Spanish Chapel, which is nearly perfect in its proportions, and consistent in its fresco decorations.

Santa Croce, begun in 1294 from Arnolfo's designs, was the answer of the Franciscans to the pretentious ambitions of the Dominicans; for they built here the largest church that belongs to either of the orders. The exterior is most uninteresting, and the interior is only redeemed by the artistic and historical values of the tombs that line the aisles, and the frescoes of Giotto in some of the chapels.

The oldest of the purely secular buildings that attest the presence of the new life is the so-called Bargello. It has served as the home of the chief magistrate of Florence; has suffered much from fire; served for long years as a prison; and has at last been transformed into a National Museum where

## GREAT CENTERS AND ARCHITECTURE

one finds a splendid collection of the works of Donatello and Della Robbia.

Not many years after the building of the Bargello, the heightened civic spirit demanded a more mag-



THE COURT OF THE BARGELLO, FLORENCE

nificent home as a center for the activities of the commune. The Palazzo Vecchio, as we now call it, was begun in 1298, from designs by Arnolfo. Its exterior reminds one of a castle, for the stone are laid in rusticated form and the wall is little broken by



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window openings. This effect is strengthened by the corbeled cornice, with an overhang of six feet, and the strong battlements that top the wall. Rising from



THE TOWER OF THE PALAZZO VECCHIO, FLORENCE

the front of the battlements, and almost overhanging the square below, is the beautiful tower that mounts one hundred eight feet toward the sky. Its chief fault is that it has no structural lines, which lead the eye from the ground to the lily of Florence at the top.



## GREAT CENTERS AND ARCHITECTURE

All the buildings that belong to this very early period of the Renaissance in Florence are of course Gothic, but one never ceases to note how little the Italians of Tuscany appreciated the Gothic spirit. Bold, beautiful flying buttresses, airy pinnacles, vanishing spires are conspicuously absent. Gothic to them was a system of decoration, and Florentine architecture passed almost directly from Romanesque to the revival of the Classical Orders.

High up among the hills, about thirty miles to the south of Florence, is her old-time rival, Siena. She began to arrive at distinction after the break-up of the territories of the Countess Matilda in the twelfth century, and grew in wealth, not so much thru her industries, as by trade in connection with the fairs of eastern France. Here the Sienese not only traded in the spices of the Orient, the leather of Spain, and the cloth of Flanders, but, along with other Italians, became the bankers and money-changers for all the various transactions. Her close proximity to Rome and connection with the papacy added much to the city's facilities for this trade in money. Her particular rival in all these activities was Florence, just as vigorous, just as aggressive, with the added power of a considerable industrial life. To this rivalry of trade was added the contention of a disputed boundary line and the bitterness of a struggle between the adherents of the pope and the emperor. Siena was Ghibelline; Florence, Guelf.

These conditions naturally led to a series of wars which lasted from the beginning of their liberties to

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the middle of the thirteenth century. The fortunes of war varied, tho Siena was usually the losing city; but at the battle of Montaperti, 1260, the Sieneze, aided by some German troops, gained a signal victory over the forces of Florence and her allies. Ten thousand Guelfs lay dead upon the field and twenty thousand were taken prisoners. Florence was condemned by the German soldiers to total destruction, and was only saved by one of her exiled Uberti, who rose in the council of her enemies and pledged his life in defense of her. It was not long before the forces of the pope rallied, sought foreign aid, and reduced Siena, once and for all, to the power of the Guelf league.

The era of peace and prosperity that followed gave rise to art in various forms. Civic art was first and most conspicuous. Siena became a city of towers tho but few of them have survived. One must visit San Gimignano in the hills to the north to get an image of the sky-line of Siena in the early days of the Renaissance. The most beautiful tower that is left in the city is the Torre della Mangia, that rises by the side of the Palazzo Pubblico, or city hall. This tower is built of brick, straight up without break or variation, for something like two hundred fifty feet. Then comes the corbeled cornice of light stone, and the lantern with its peal of bells. Perhaps there is only one tower that may be compared with it for purity of lines and delicacy of proportions, the Campanile at Florence. So beautiful is the tower that the Palazzo gets scant attention tho it is a building of considerable distinction in design.

*GREAT CENTERS AND ARCHITECTURE*



THE PALAZZO PUBBLICO, SIENA

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

The Cathedral is another great building of this early period. It was begun about the middle of the thirteenth century, but the western façade was not put in place until 1382. The Sieneſe had dreamed of building the largest church in Italy, and there are ſome arches to ſhow their audacity in actually beginning ſuch a project; but their reſources and the plague of 1348 put a limit to their enthuſiaſm. The exterior is faced with red, white, and black marble that is almoſt barbaric in the bright Italian ſunſhine, and is ſatisfactory only in the ſoft light of evening. The interior is ſtriking in effect from the uſe of the ſame materials.

The great and rich Lombard plain, with its important city of Milan, and its old capital city of Pavia, offered many opportunities for the growth of art. But its very ſituation on the highway between the North and Italy made it a bone of contention in the quarrels of popes and emperors. So late as 1162, Milan ſuffered almoſt total deſtruction at the hands of Frederick Barbaroſſa. Its very need for a ſtrong government made it early fall into the hands of a ruling family, the Viſconti, who aſſerted their authority from 1277 to 1447. They were followed by the Sforza family from 1450 to 1535, who plunged Italy again into the maelſtrom of northern politics, and left Lombardy as a dependence of the Spaniſh kings.

Notwithſtanding all the political violence, Milan was the center of an intereſting art development. While ſhe had been a free city, a great irrigation canal, tapping the inexhauſtible waters of Lake



## GREAT CENTERS AND ARCHITECTURE

Maggiore, had been spread over her surrounding territory, and crops never failed. The silk industry was introduced by the Visconti; mulberry trees covered the plain; and rich revenues filled the coffers of the city and the ruling family. Out of this abundant wealth, they founded the cathedral in 1386, and the Certosa di Pavia ten years later.

The Certosa is a group of monastic buildings at the old Lombard capital, Pavia, some eighteen miles south of Milan. The distinctive architectural interest is in the façade of the church. The body of the church is Gothic, while the front was put on in the style of the late fourteen hundreds.

The cathedral at Milan is one of the largest churches in Christendom; it is said to hold about forty thousand people. Since the dominant dimension of the front is width (220 ft.) rather than height (157 ft.), one misses the loftiness of northern Gothic, but one catches the feeling of verticality in the hundreds of pinnacles into which the mass breaks against the sky-line. When one walks over the rather flat stone roof, he seems to be in a cunningly devised, petrified forest, where every tree trunk has blossomed into statues, and the sides have been hollowed out into niches for myriads of small figures of saints and martyrs.

The interior, also, fails to carry loftiness as a dominant impression. The nave is nearly one hundred fifty feet high, height enough to make an Amiens; but the splendid shafts are not permitted to thrill the eye with an immense reach of unbroken line. Their tops are treated with a ring of canopied

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

niches, filled with statuary. The eye stops with these, and the grand effect is weakened. Richness of detail has been gained, but the chief glory of the northern Gothic has been lost.



MILAN CATHEDRAL, FLYING BUTTRESSES

And yet,—there is no building in all Italy that produces a more profound impression on the beholder. The cathedral is really grand, in spite of its defects.

“The height, the space, the gloom, the glory!  
The mount of marble, a hundred spires.”

Venice has a very unique story which one must understand if he would know why she trailed other cities in the evolution of Renaissance culture.

## GREAT CENTERS AND ARCHITECTURE

In the days when the barbarians of the north were laying waste the fertile Lombard plain, the refugees found shelter on the lidi, or low sandbars, that were formed at the river mouths along the north shore of the Adriatic. In time, they were permanently dispossessed of their old homes, their old political affiliations destroyed; but they founded new homes, and new institutions at Chioggia, Malamocco, Murano, Torcello, and at the Rivo Alto (Rialto), where now is modern Venice. As communication down the sea was easy, and trade abundant, this group of peoples looked to the Eastern Empire for alliance and protection. In the ninth century, these islands were strong enough to resist the efforts of Pepin to bring them under the sway of the Western Empire, and they set up a central government of their own, with its capital at Venice.

A few years later, some Venetian merchants brought the body of St. Mark the Evangelist to the city, and furnished a rallying point for civic loyalty and religious devotion. St. Mark became tutelary saint, displacing St. Theodore, whose statue still remains on a column in the Piazzetta by the side of the Lion of St. Mark. The Venetian battle flag was decorated with the symbol of St. Mark. And the first great work of art among the Venetians was the temple they erected as a shrine for the body of their new religious protector.

To make her government efficient, Venice preserved the form of a republic, but ruled through an oligarchy that was without mercy when any noble tried to lift himself above his fellows. At the head was



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

the duke, or doge, who was held strictly to account by various laws and agencies, and who was terribly punished if ever he was suspected of disloyalty. Venice never knew a despot in the way other communes of Italy understood the term.

Her lack of connection with the mainland of Italy, and her intimate relations with the Byzantine Empire and the Orient, minimized the effects of the quarrels of popes and emperors upon her life. Indeed, so thoroly indifferent was she to the whole matter that pope and emperor came to her, as to neutral territory, for meeting and reconciliation. And her rulers were so proud of the fact that large illustrations of the scene adorn the Hall of the Grand Council. Neither did Venice feel the great impulse from the Crusades that came to Florence and other cities of Italy. She had already been borrowing from the treasures of the East. For example, a Venetian law had compelled every ship that sailed into her harbor to bring something rich for the shrine of St. Mark. She was not surprised by the richness of eastern culture, therefore, as were the younger and more isolated communities.

Without doubt, then, in the fourteenth century life was more comfortable in Venice than elsewhere in Italy. She had been rich; she was becoming richer at a rapid rate. She had a long and honorable history of achievement. She had a government that looked with suspicion on innovations, and she already had well-established traditions of culture. We should hardly expect her to be receptive to the appeal of western art. Giotto, the great innovator



## GREAT CENTERS AND ARCHITECTURE

in painting worked only twenty miles away, but he created no interest in the Queen of the Adriatic. Only the beauty of the Gothic system of ornament caught her enthusiasm. Her wealthy families turned to it as a means of display, and built palaces on the Grand Canal that still retain our admiration. The Palazzo Contarini and the Ca d'Oro are fine examples of the balanced designs and delicate details for which the Venetian architects strove at this time.

Of course they are far surpassed in majesty by the great capitol building, the Palace of the Doges. It is rather significant that the chief state building is placed in front of the chief shrine. Unthinkable, isn't it, that any great religious movement should come out of this city? The state is supreme, and the state building must face the sea, whence the traveler of that day came.

The general design of the palace violates many of the canons of good architecture, but its total effect is charming, both for its color, and its light and shade. The upper part is laid with slabs of colored marble in which rose and orange dominate, and blend into a soft tone, in happy contrast to the bold use of colored marble at Florence and Siena. The lower part has two Gothic arcades that are the home of flitting lights and deep shadows.

The grand entrance is by the Porta della Carta, between St. Mark's and the palace. It is most stately in its general effect and elegant in its details, eminently suited to its purpose. Through this majestic portal, one enters a magnificent court, finished

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

in a later style of architecture; and, by a richly ornamented staircase, reaches the state offices in the second and third stories. Everywhere one is aston-



ST. MARK'S, VENICE: CENTRAL DOOR

ished at the lavish use of gold and the suggestions of oriental taste; the richness of the heavy coffered ceilings and their priceless decorations of pictures; and one wonders what the effect must have been before the fire that destroyed all of Titian's decora-

## GREAT CENTERS AND ARCHITECTURE

tions. It is clear that the Doge's Palace lays open the mind and taste of Venice in the days of her glory.

In St. Mark's, however, we feel more clearly the oriental origin of her tastes and art. As one approaches the portals, he sees above them the Greek horses that were brought from Constantinople when Venice triumphed over her in 1204. In the recessed doorways stand the antique columns of varied design and splendid marble, that were brought from old ruined temples to glorify the shrine of St. Mark. Inside, the capitals of the columns are Byzantine. The pulpits, very unique, are Byzantine. The walls and ceiling are covered with gold. The chief ornament of the high altar, the Pala d'Oro, a gem of the jeweler's craft, came from Constantinople. Everywhere the eye catches the spirit of oriental magnificence that comes from elegant detail, brilliant color, and luxurious materials.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY SCULPTURE

**S**CULPTURE, from many points of view, is closely related to architecture. Indeed, the occasions have been rare in the history of art when the alliance between the two has been broken. Almost all the very finest sculpture of the nation supreme in sculpture, the Greeks, was very definitely connected with Greek buildings. The Parthenon, their supreme creation in architecture, was adorned with their supreme achievement in sculpture. The Romans, it is true, developed portrait sculpture which was quite independent of architecture. The late period of the Renaissance boasted of masters in sculpture who rose to such heights of inspiration that their work freed itself from the conventional setting. In the early period the situation was the usual one; sculpture was the grandiose adornment of the buildings, which, we have seen, revealed the aspiration and pride of the various communities.

In the Campo Santo at Pisa, to which reference has already been made, there were centuries ago, and are today, many Roman sarcophagi ranged about the cloister walls. On the side of one of these was carved in the high relief which the late Romans seemed to enjoy, the story of Phaedra and Hippolytus. Near the end of the relief sits Hera, watching the action



## EARLY SCULPTURE

of the race. One day an artist, who had the spirit of the innovator, passed by that sarcophagus, and caught the beauty of the figure of Hera when it was not the fashion to admire things Roman. No doubt the appeal grew stronger to him with many successive views, so that later, when he was asked to carve a pulpit for the Baptistery, this occurred to him as a worthy figure for the Madonna in his relief of the Adoration of the Magi. On that day when Niccolo Pisano determined to transfer the figure from that old Roman sarcophagus to a contemporary pulpit, there was a re-birth of an old civilization; the Renaissance in sculpture came into being. We may date the Renaissance, as the term is usually understood, from this event, 1260.

It has been maintained, and it may well be true, that Niccolo Pisano came from the south, perhaps from the Amalfi coast and brought with him a better craft and a love for the antique, but the evidence for this is not convincing. It is just as happy a suggestion that men's minds move along the same channels though quite removed from personal contact, and discover the same things at approximately the same time. Niccolo was subject to the same unrest, the same stirring life, that produced tremendous innovations in business and politics, and there is no need to import him from the south.

He is a man about whose life we know very little except what is revealed in the art he created. We know that he was an architect; that he finished the Castello dell' Ovo at Naples; and that he built San Antonio at Padua, whose many domes astonish the

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

traveler today. In sculpture, he executed the pulpits for the Baptistry at Pisa and the Cathedral at Siena; the tomb of St. Dominic at Bologna; and began the fountain in the great square at Perugia.

His pulpit for the Baptistry at Pisa is hexagonal in shape, which puts it fairly in harmony with the circular form of the building. The alternate supporting columns rest upon the backs of grotesque lions of medieval tradition. The capitals are of the Corinthian order, though not of the best type. The arches are round, decorated with Gothic cusps. The bungling figures of the spandrels are the result of unobserving traditionalism. They possess neither the spirit of life, nor the quality of harmonious adjustment to the architectural spaces they occupy.

The reliefs that cover the sides of the pulpit proper are very different. The craftsmanship seems to be founded on old Roman technique. While the figures are not correct, they are not bungling and they are full of the suggestion of life. In the panel of the Adoration of the Magi, the Madonna is a new creation. The medieval Christian workman, with only devotion to guide his hand, had evolved a rude figure that, under religious conservatism and unthinking art, had persisted all through the Middle Ages. Some of the Gothic sculpture, just before Niccolo's time, had made slight deviations from the type; but Pisano breaks with tradition and transforms the figure under the influence of the antique.

The pulpit at Pisa was followed by the one at Siena. The hexagon became an octagon; the com-

*EARLY SCULPTURE*



PULPIT OF BAPTISTRY, PISA



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

position of the reliefs, more intricate; the decoration, more elaborate; and the play of light and shade, more delicate. Niccolo has more boldness in invention and feels more sure of his craftsmanship.

His work and spirit were carried on by his fellow townsman, or relative, or both, Andrea Pisano. His great work is the modeling and casting of the first pair of bronze doors for the Baptistry at Florence. In 1330, this building was still serving as the cathedral. It had been remodeled a few years before, but its doors were the old ones of thick oak, studded with the massive, hand-made nails that bound the different layers of wood together. No doubt these doors possessed much simple dignity, but they were far too simple for the Florence that was building a city hall, a cathedral, and numerous pretentious churches. Besides, had not Pisa and other Italian cities bronze doors for their great cathedrals? They must do as much, thought the Florentines. To Andrea Pisano they therefore gave a commission for a pair of doors that should measure up in cost and artistic merit to the city's prosperity, prestige, and ideals.

Bronze itself was at this time, no doubt, very expensive and the art of casting it almost unknown. What training Andrea had in modeling and bronze casting, we do not know. It may be that he had none, for one of the pronounced characteristics of the Renaissance was its versatility. Americans are not the first people that have been bold and ingenious. Pisano's first attempt was not successful; his second was satisfactory. This pair of doors, set up in 1336, held their place of honor at the east entrance of the



EARLY SCULPTURE



PISANO'S DOORS; BAPTISTRY, FLORENCE

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Baptistry for nearly a hundred years, and are still doing duty at the south.

Each door is divided into fourteen panels. At the corner of each panel is a small lion's head in high relief. Between these heads, an imitation of the old



PISANO'S DOORS, BAPTISTRY, FLORENCE  
HEROD AND SALOME; THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

nail heads alternates with conventionalized flower forms. The space thus framed is further constricted by double moldings, a row of frets, and a raised pattern made up of curves and angles in a formally balanced design. It is simple, dignified, admirably adapted to give adequate play to light and shade.

The spaces thus designed are filled with sculpture

## EARLY SCULPTURE

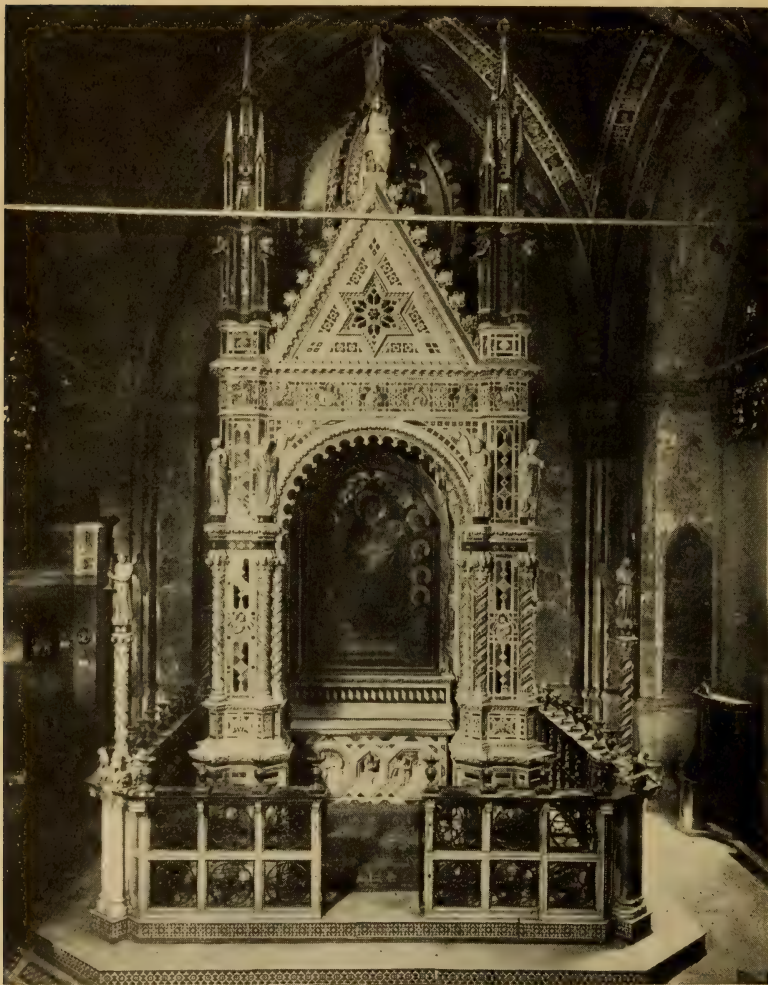
in rather low relief. Twenty of the twenty-eight panels have scenes from the life of John the Baptist; the remaining eight, at the bottom of the doors, contain allegorical figures of virtues, as Faith, Temperance, and Prudence. The scenes are portrayed with the creative spirit and the increasingly deft craft of the generation following Niccolo Pisano. The accessories, though elegant, are restrained in number. The same is true of the number of figures. Andrea knew the value of vacant space. He knew, also, how to enliven his figures through suggestion. In the panel of the Beheading of John, how much more effective is the portrayal with a descending sword in the hands of the executioner, than it would be with the head of John already rolling on the floor! The suggestion of impending doom is far more impressive than ugly representation would be.

Further, how much truth of nature there is in the pose and action of the executioner! We feel the weight of the body, the tension of the muscles, the concentrated energy of the moment. Certainly there is nothing in sculpture up to this time, to compare with the realism of this figure. Add to the truth of nature in this scene, the grace of body and of drapery in Salome on the contiguous panel, and one sees that Andrea Pisano has displayed a craft and a temper that make enduring work. This pair of doors still holds a high place among the achievements of Italian art.

Somewhat later in the century, another sculptor appeared, Andrea Orcagna, who has already been referred to as the builder of the shrine for Or San



THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



ORCAGNA'S TABERNACLE, OR SAN MICHELE, FLORENCE



## EARLY SCULPTURE

Michele and its miracle-working picture. This tabernacle was a bit of architecture in the Gothic style. The marble is chiseled into dainty designs



ORCAGNA'S TABERNACLE: ANNUNCIATION OF THE DEATH  
OF THE VIRGIN

and the surface is inlaid with multi-colored mosaic. Sculpture is much used, both in the round and in relief. The most pretentious of the reliefs is the Assumption of the Virgin, but the most unique is the Annunciation of the Death of the Virgin.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

There are many annunciations of the birth of the Virgin, or of John, or of Jesus, but the coming of the angel to announce a death is most unusual. Orcagna has most beautifully characterized the Virgin by the quiet smile with which she greets the call. Like a soldier on sentry duty, she seems glad to be relieved. The composition is well arranged; the drapery, well managed. The box seat, with its perfect lock and carved back, and the little window that looks out into the blue, are most happily done. Like other small reliefs, this is charmingly framed by a shell decoration that could only have been the work of a lover of beauty.

Niccolo Pisano, Andrea, and Orcagna lifted sculpture far out of traditionalism, gave it a glimpse of the beauty of the classical, and pointed the way toward the fascination of the human figure and changing emotion.

### CHAPTER III

#### PAINTING BEFORE 1400

**P**AINTING ranks next to architecture in importance in this early period. There are two reasons for its precedence over sculpture. The first is the teaching power of pictures. In a day when books were expensive and few could read, the pictures in the church were a mighty power for education. The second was the presence of great wall spaces that needed some sort of decoration, for which painting was especially appropriate. The windows were small in Italy, because of the bright light, and the wall spaces correspondingly large. In Northern churches, the windows were large and made a demand for painted glass.

In the Middle Ages, painting, of course, had been practiced, but it had been confined to narrow uses and had followed very definite traditions of subject and technique. The love of color had found expression in mosaics, rather than in flowing pigments. Coincident with the stir of thought in the thirteenth century, painters began to make changes in the poses and symbolism that had become the law in an unthinking age. The innovators appeared first in two of the Tuscan cities where the new spirit erected churches and town halls, Florence and Siena; and they are the only two that are important until after 1400.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Florence has priority in importance. The list of noteworthy artists is short. Cimabue, Giotto, Orcagna sum up all the progress that was made in a



BYZANTINE MADONNA

hundred and fifty years. Cimabue was the earliest. Of his life, nothing definite is known. Like a ghost, he walks across the stage and is gone, leaving few, if any, pictures, upon which there is complete agreement regarding his authorship. Vasari makes him



## PAINTING BEFORE 1400

the painter of the Rucellai Madonna and gives a circumstantial account of the joy of Florence when the picture was carried in triumphal procession from



CIMABUE, RUCELLAI MADONNA

the artist's studio, to the church of S. M. Novella. While the weight of present-day criticism seems to deny the story, the picture may represent, by comparison with a Byzantine Madonna, how far Cimabue advanced upon the traditional figures of the period.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

He changed the pose of the Madonna, loosened up her neck, infused a bit of life into the angels, and made it easy for others to make greater changes. Praise or blame must be meted out to him, not in comparison with the best of his followers, but with the products of his own age, such as the stiff, lifeless figures of the Byzantines.

Giotto is said to have been the pupil of Cimabue. The story goes that Giotto was a shepherd boy; that one day while he was drawing one of his sheep on a rock of the hillside, Cimabue happened along the way, and seeing promise in the attempt, told the boy to follow him. If he did, as the story tells us, he soon improved on his teacher's instruction, and grew to be far and away, the greatest artist of the fourteenth century. He was the builder of the most beautiful campanile in Italy, which still charms the visitor to Florence; and is responsible for some of the sculpture which adorns its sides.

While he traveled and painted in many towns, his chief work was done in Assisi, Padua, and Florence. Judging from the style, his first important work was at Assisi. Contrary to the wishes of St. Francis, a great church had been erected over his tomb, or rather as his tomb, and Giotto was called to decorate the walls with scenes from the life of the saint. Here we see Francis giving back his clothes to his wealthy and angry father, while a priest covers his body with the cloth of the church. We see the pope dreaming that the saint is the support of the tottering church; we see Francis preaching to the birds; and we behold the sorrow of his followers

PAINTING BEFORE 1400



SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI; LOWER CHURCH, SHOWING GIOTTO'S WORK OVER THE ALTAR



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

gathered round his death-bed. The stories are so plainly and so naïvely told that we accept, while we smile at their quaintness.

More ambitious still is the decoration of the vaulting over the tomb in the lower church of this same pretentious San Francesco. The groins of the vaulting divide the arched space into four triangular parts which Giotto filled with an Apotheosis of Francis, and allegories representing the three cardinal virtues of the Franciscans—Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. Poverty is a bride with tattered dress, the sport of boys and barking dogs, but St. Francis loves her, and angels stand on either side rapt in adoration. Chastity is a maiden far away from the world of temptation, high up in a medieval tower. Obedience is represented by a monk who kneels to receive the yoke. A brother lays it upon his neck with one hand, and enjoins silence with the other. To our left is the strange figure of Prudence, with her double face that she may see behind her as well as in front, a real fundamental in obedience. On the opposite side is the equally strange figure of a Centaur, that Giotto got from the pagan mythology. Unwelcome, it starts back in terror as one of the kneeling figures pulls aside the cloak that disguised it. If we recall that the Centaur, half man, half lower animal, represented intelligence without self-control, it is easy to see how effective it was for Giotto's purpose. St. Francis himself is rather awkwardly introduced in the unused space above the canopy.

While we must admire Giotto's power to fill space in these compositions, the appeal of all the pictures is



## PAINTING BEFORE 1400

primarily intellectual. They cannot be said to mount high in the scale of art achievement, but are most interesting as lights upon the life of medievalism and waymarks in the triumph of Giotto.

Perhaps he went next to Padua; at all events, his work here shows a decided advance over what we



GIOTTO: OBEDIENCE

have been studying. A rich son erected a chapel to perfume the name of his disreputable father, and since it is hard by an old Roman arena, it has been called the Arena Chapel. Here, in row upon row, on the broad side walls, Giotto painted the story of Mary and of Jesus. While the pictures are not less intelligible than those at Assisi, there is a distinct

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

advance in the representation of the emotional life. Though the hair is woolly and the face is often a blank, the poses are often telling and sometimes we catch the variations of a common feeling. The Pres-



GIOTTO: PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN, ARENA CHAPEL, PADUA

entation of the Virgin is a fine example of these qualities. The figures have a common interest, which is carefully graded to suit the relation of the individual to the center of interest, Mary.

The greatest work of Giotto is undoubtedly at

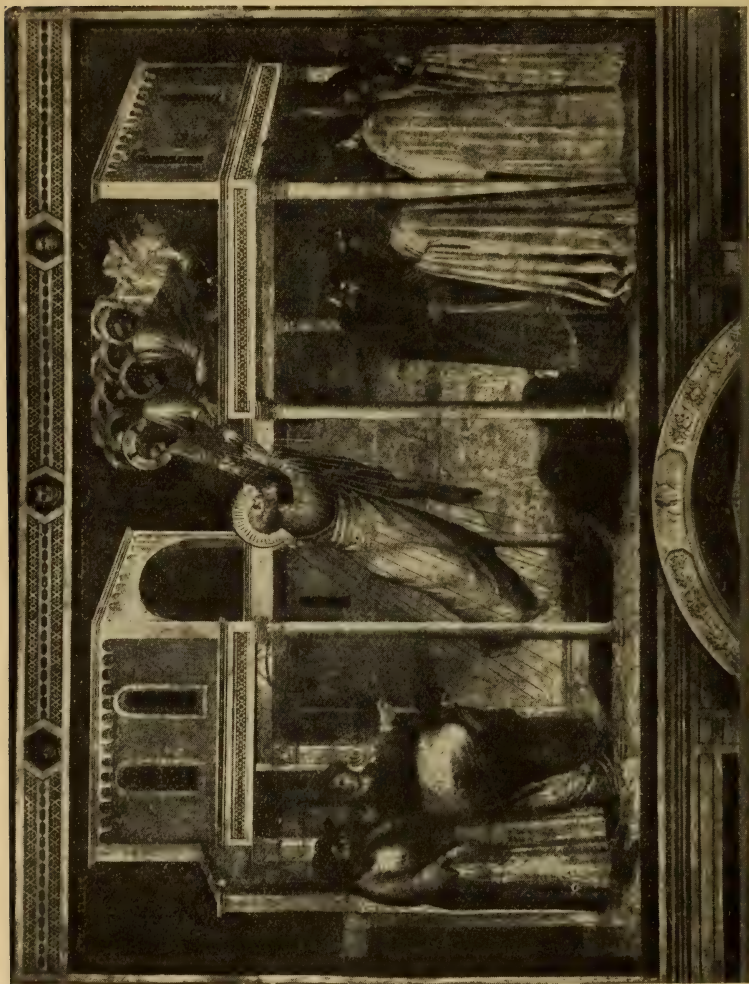
## PAINTING BEFORE 1400

Florence, whether this was last done or not. The great Bardi and Peruzzi families had their private chapels in the church of Santa Groco, up near the altar. For them and on their walls, Giotto painted his masterpieces. The time came, however, when either for lack of appreciation or sanitary reasons, these frescoes were covered with whitewash. In the last century this was removed with the most painstaking care, but naturally much damage was done to the original pictures, and they were carefully retouched. While, therefore, we cannot come close to Giotto's niceties of brush work in these recovered pictures, we may see what a wonderful composer he has become, and how facile he is in the power of suggestion.

In the Peruzzi chapel, he has taken as his theme, incidents in the life of the two St. Johns. The most interesting picture to look at for its emotional suggestion is the Ascension of John the Evangelist. In the cloister of a monastery, on either side of a grave are gathered two groups, while in the middle of the picture, the glorified John rises to meet a host of angels from the sky. The group at the left seems to be in various chance attitudes about the grave, but closer study will show splendid psychic suggestion. One man leans far over, peers into the tomb, and explores all its corners. The body *must* be somewhere in the tomb, he thinks; he has not the least inkling of a resurrection. The next man has had his look and is straightening up, still in the questioning mood, asking himself, *can* the body have disappeared. The next lifts his hands in amaze-



THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



GIOTTO: ASCENSION OF JOHN; PERUZZI CHAPEL, SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE



## PAINTING BEFORE 1400

ment, as he announces his conclusion that the body has actually vanished. The other two are convinced and thoughtful, wondering what could have happened to the body, or where it has been taken. Now look across at the other group. Eyes of faith are no longer interested in the grave; they *see* the ascending body of John, so brilliant with light that the nearest must needs shade his eyes from the glorious vision. And John is actually rising, a marvelous triumph for the constricted technique of Giotto. See how carelessly he cuts away his architecture that he may make room for the ascending body, and reveal to us the angel throng that joyfully receives him into the heavens!

In the Bardi chapel, we have scenes from the life of St. Francis. Two are especially noteworthy, St. Francis before the Sultan, and the Death of St. Francis. In the first, the saint stands confidently before a blazing fire, which he is prepared to enter in a contest of the Christian with the Moslem faith. His single attendant shrinks from the ordeal, as do the Moslem priests on the other side of the picture. The Sultan urges them to the trial, but beaten already, they are disappearing thru the door, save one who, in anger and fright, declaims against being detained by the Sultan's attendant.

Now let us study the picture that gathers up perhaps more of the high qualities of Giotto's art than any other,—The Death of St. Francis. The supreme longing of St. Francis was to have the nail marks on hands and feet and the spear thrust in his side. This longing was gratified, as his age be-

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

lieved, and high psychological authorities of our time accept as possible. While St. Francis lies upon his death-bed in an open court, with the officials of the church gathered at the head and foot, followers group themselves on either side about the bier. Evidently they are examining the body to see for themselves that the stigmata are there. Now mark the great sweep of the composition, the line that swings from one upper corner to the other and gathers in its curve the heads of the groups at either end and the body of St. Francis in the middle. There come to meet it the radiating lines of the angel wings in the sky that carry it thru the canopies of the architecture and their brackets. Thus a great ellipse is formed that makes the chief line of the composition, and includes the main figures. But there is also a small ellipse, or rather egg-shaped figure, traced by the monks that kneel and stand about the body, and this is tangent to, or included in, the sweep of the great curve, so that all the figures must pass under the eye of the spectator. They are unified in the composition.

Splendid as this is, it is equalled by the way in which Giotto has individualized these figures, while fitting them into a larger theme. What we saw in the groups of the Ascension of John is repeated here in a more refined form. In front of the body kneels the doubter, a church official, who opens the robe of St. Francis to discover the marks of the spear in the side. We cannot see his face, but we may be sure that if there were any deception, he would be certain to unmask it. Devoted followers kiss

PAINTING BEFORE 1400



GIOTTO: DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS, BARDI CHAPEL; SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

the hands and feet; they are satisfied. Back of the bed stands a group that has never doubted; they only wait for the departure of the soul straight to the desired haven. The farthest of the four waits quietly but expectantly; the next presses forward eagerly; the wave of emotion stops in the third; and surges into gesticulation in the fourth. A fifth, more intense in his desire, bends close to the mouth from which they believed the soul would pass. The last in the line (perhaps it was Brother Leo) with surer vision leans back in ecstasy as he discovers the soul of the Saint already mounting heavenward, showing to the Unseen the stigmata which the Doubter by his corpse is surprised to find in his side.

You see that Giotto is a story-teller. Everywhere he went he left behind him stories with so simple a faith in the thing which he tells, that he carries conviction, even tho one may reject when out from under his spell. Simplicity is his dominant characteristic. There are almost no figures, or other accessories, that are not vital to his purpose. With all his simplicity, he is sophisticated enough to seize the moment that is most dramatic. He is naïve, but he tells his story with very fine art.

This man, who puts a halo about medieval conceptions, had very little technical equipment for his work. The commonplaces of modern technique were as unknown to him as the electric light, or chemistry. He only guesses at perspective; he little dreams of the power of shadows as they are used by a Rembrandt; his colors all lack brilliancy; he



## PAINTING BEFORE 1400

probably never drew a figure from life, and knew nothing of artistic anatomy. But his figures and their drapery were far better than the world had seen for more than a thousand years. His composition is justly admired by the best of the moderns. His power over the inadequate language he possesses is the marvel of all who have learned a better. If a man's greatness is to be measured by the amount of improvement he makes over his predecessors, and the impetus he gives to further improvement, there are few names in all the range of art that may be compared with Giotto. With the minimum of equipment, he produced a maximum of result.

The third master of painting at Florence in this period is the builder of Or San Michele and the sculptor of its beautiful shrine, Orcagna. His life illustrates again the versatility of the men of his age, who seem to turn their attention almost equally well to architecture, sculpture, and painting. His contribution is the introduction of a feminine grace in his figures that Giotto did not appreciate, and that certainly was quite beyond Cimabue. This quality has been conspicuously seen in the tabernacle of Or San Michele, and is finely illustrated in the Paradise which he painted for the Strozzi Chapel of Santa Maria Novella.

In the upper part of a composition that fills the whole round arch of a side wall, sit Christ and the Virgin, with a serene expression on faces that look more human even than most of Giotto's. Just below them are two angels in adoration, that are noticeable for the graceful lines of body and drapery.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

On either side and up and down the wall is the hierarchy of the redeemed. There are many faces that we call "sweet" in this picture, some of which are seen in the detail of the lower left hand corner where we may discover St. Veronica, St. Catherine, and others. Their heads are small, their faces delicate



ORCAGNA: PARADISE; DETAIL OF LOWER PORTION

and regular. Their figures are long to make them decorative, their bodies are frail to mirror the delicate dependence that was the ideal of womanhood. All in all, they have a charm that is seen in no work that precedes Orcagna. It would not be far wrong to say that he was the Raphael of his generation, and Giotto, its Michelangelo.

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Painting in Siena began a new life about the same time that we find innovations in Florence. A certain Duccio, who was a contemporary of Giotto, was the innovator. His great masterpiece was the so-called *Majestas* for the cathedral. We have the same story about this picture that we do regarding the *Rucellai Madonna*, that it was carried in triumphal procession to its place in the cathedral in 1311. The *Majestas* was not exactly an altar-piece, for it was meant to be seen on both sides. On the one side was the Virgin and Child, surrounded by angels and adored by bishops. The other side was divided into thirty-eight panels, each depicting some phase of the Passion. Everywhere there is evidence that Duccio was a follower of the Byzantine traditions, tho in some cases the figures assume a bolder attitude, and are distinctive for the grace and feeling that we associate with the later Siennese school.

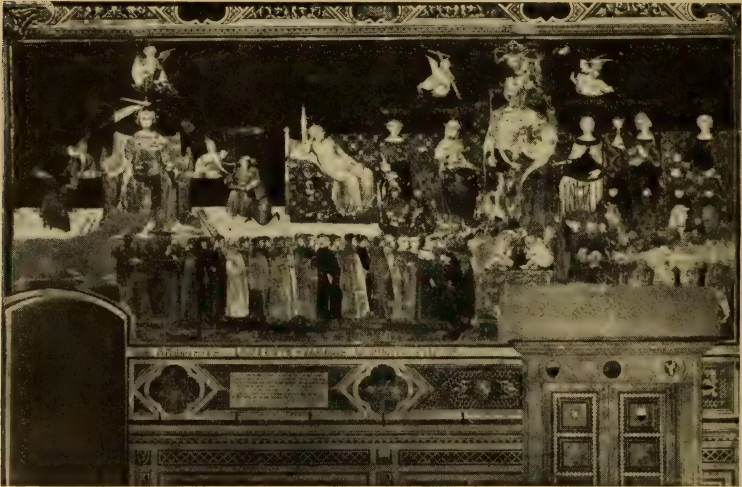
Duccio had many followers, the most distinguished of whom are the brothers, Ambrogio and Pietro Lorenzetti, in whom the art of Siena reached its golden age. Ambrogio is the greater of the two, tho the younger. He is seen at his best in the fresco of *Good Government* in the *Palazzo Pubblico*, where he has placed a symbolical figure of the commune on a throne, with the civic virtues seated on a long bench on either side. The allegory is interesting, but the finest thing about the composition is the figure of Peace that leans gracefully upon her elbow at one end of the row. This figure illustrates many of the errors of the time in ana-



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

tomical drawing, but one cannot ask perfection in this until there have been many years of observation and careful representation. The astonishing thing is the peaceful pose and the rhythmic disposition of the drapery.

Sienese artists traveled widely. Simone Martini worked in far Avignon in France; Pietro Lorenzetti painted on the walls of San Francesco at As-



LORENZETTI: GOOD GOVERNMENT, SIENA

sisi; some of the Sienese were occupied in Florence and Pisa. One of the pictures at Pisa is of special interest, as showing the teaching function of art and the kind of teaching that was thought profitable. It is the Triumph of Death, in the Campo Santo, a fit place for the awful warnings. On the one side, there is a company of richly-dressed pleasure seekers, seated in the shade of a summer garden;



PAINTING BEFORE 1400



TRIUMPH OF DEATH, PISA

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

but one seems suddenly to have fallen sick, and the winged figure of Death, with a tremendous scythe, sweeps down upon the company. To the left is a huddled group of corpses, and from the mouths, the souls depart in the form of newborn babes. Above, the souls are carried away by black or white angels "according to the deeds done in the body," while in one case both a black and a white angel contend for the same soul. On the rocky mountain top at the left are openings from which spout subterranean fires, and into these openings the black angels are pushing the souls which they have carried away. Down in the valley, in the extreme lower corner of the picture, is a royal hunting party, which has suddenly reined up its horses in front of three coffins, that seem to bar the way. The horses sniff and arch their necks. One man holds his nose; others turn away in disgust; and the women look sad. And to complete the lesson, a winding path leads up to a little monastery, in front of which a monk sits reading, while another milks a goat, and still another leans on his staff in contemplation of the whole scene. The call to a life of asceticism is very clear, and for that time very effective.

As compared with the Florentines, the Sienese artists are less original, adhere more closely to the traditions of the Byzantines, and by not tapping the fountains of realism, they denied themselves the life-giving waters of progress, while securing a beauty of product that is not characteristic of Giotto. But the way of progress was the way of Giotto.

## PART II

### THE QUATTROCENTO

THE Quattrocento, the Italian name for the fifteenth century, is the period of the great evolution in Italian art, particularly in painting and in sculpture. Its manifestation was much more wide-spread than in the preceding period when Florence and Siena monopolized our attention. Padua, Venice, Milan, Ferrara, Bologna, and the hill country of Umbria all share in the light which Florence and Siena had set blazing in the preceding century. As this period is essentially one of evolution, it is unnecessary to follow its progress in all the different communities, since the characteristics are much the same. It is better to make a special study of the art life as it developed in its completest form in Florence, and shorter studies of two other important sections of Italy, Umbria and Venetia.

The Quattrocento was the happiest century in all the history of Florence. Her civic life was vigorous, even if quarrelsome; and her wealth was growing at an amazing rate, tho it had not yet piled up to the point where it attracted the cupidity and the armies of foreign rulers. The farmers of the contado practiced agriculture so intensively as to put us moderns to shame. The manufactures of cloth and gold were sold in all the markets of the world.



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Capitalists and bankers from the Arno were found in all the busy marts, and were noted for their astuteness and large dealings. Tho the Florentine was comparatively small among Italian states, it was reckoned among the first five in wealth and influence.

[This economic prosperity naturally reacted strongly on the social consciousness. The feeling of independence and self-direction became stronger; the separation from the Empire, greater; and the desire on the part of all the citizens to participate in the government became irrepressible. The guilds of course had become very powerful and had compelled the nobles to become members as a prerequisite to the holding of office. But the unorganized workers had not yet any share in the government. The weavers, dyers, and fullers of wool, with other unorganized workers, engaged in a series of riots in 1378, in what is called the Revolt of the Ciompi. In a short time, they had the reins of government in their own hands. Then that followed which has so often followed the efforts of the inexperienced in government—excesses and disaster. Gradually the brainy and more experienced nobles regained control; but they had learned their lesson. Perhaps at no time in her history was Florence governed more wisely than in the early years of the fifteenth century.

An instance of what had been gained and of how the enlarged civic consciousness manifested itself is shown in the repeal, in 1378, of the Law of Admonition. A century before, the Guelf party had passed a law excluding all Ghibellines from participation in the government. It provided also that



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any one suspected of being a Ghibelline might be "admonished" by the magistrate and exiled from the city. Of course so powerful a weapon was used by the party in power against any one who gave promise of becoming influential in opposition; and many members of the families that were growing rich and powerful suffered. This procedure made all these "new" families, the Ricci, Scala, Strozzi, and Medici, more or less democratic in their sympathies, and made, therefore, for the enlargement of the rights of the individual.

The influence of this political freedom and economic prosperity upon art and the artist is easy to see. In the time of Giotto, the church had been almost the only patron of art. It called for altar-pieces, for instruction in the lives of the saints; and it covered its walls with what it conceived to be the true, the good, and the beautiful. But in the Quattrocento the great fortunes of corporations and individuals were partly spent in making guild halls magnificent, and private palaces beautiful and rich. Artists were employed, not alone by the church in portraying the Christian story, but in private chapel and stately hall in portraying whatever might be interesting to the new patrons. The art theme was enlarged and made to embrace the varied interests and changing ideas of the new generation.

A vigorous communal life is the fertile soil in which the great mind grows. Great men and great ideas grow up together. It is to be expected, therefore, that among all the personalities that grace the

## *THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART*

end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century, some should tower high and become the beacon lights for the mariners and explorers of the age. In Florence there were five great personalities in whom are summed up most of the achievements in art of the first half of the century. These men were Brunelleschi, Donatello, della Quercia, Ghiberti, and Masaccio. The first was the greatest architect of the century, and an expounder of the science that underlay the movement. The second was the master spirit of sculpture. The third was the greatest sculptor in Italy outside of Florence, somewhat unfortunate in being born outside the main current of events. The fourth was an apostle of beauty and the maker of the "Gates of Paradise". The fifth was so great an innovator that he made a new art of Byzantine painting.

## CHAPTER IV

### SCULPTURE

IT is sculpture that first clearly shows the characteristics of the new period. It gets its opportunity from the presence of the old architecture that needed completer and more beautiful decoration. So splendidly did it improve the opportunity that the year 1401 becomes the most satisfactory date with which to mark the end of the old régime and the beginning of a new movement in art. In this year, the authorities in control of the cathedral in Florence decided that the old wooden doors of the Baptistry must be replaced by others similar in design to those made for the east portal back in 1336. Several artists entered the competition, of whom the most important were Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, and della Quercia. After much deliberation, the commission was given to Ghiberti, while Brunelleschi was adjudged second and della Quercia third. One would give very much to know upon what basis the decision was made. While that pleasure is denied us, we are most fortunate in having the original panels submitted by Ghiberti and Brunelleschi preserved for us in the museum of the Bargello at Florence.

Before taking up these panels, we must take note of Quercia, since this is the only point at which he mingles with the main stream of events. Jacopo



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

della Quercia was born near Siena in 1374, and did all his work outside of Florence. But for him, fifteenth century sculpture would be Florentine sculpture. He left three important works.

The first of these, in time of commission, was the Fonte Gaja which was the terminal fountain of an aqueduct at Siena. While it was so successful that della Quercia was known by its name, it has suffered so much from time that the badly weathered reliefs have been removed to a museum.

While he should have been at work on the fountain, della Quercia accepted a commission for the tomb of Ilaria, wife of Guinigi, the ruling lord of Lucca. At the fall of the Guinigi family, this tomb was broken up, but the effigy and two slabs of the base are left, and make one of the most beautiful tombs of the Renaissance. The base is evidently inspired by some classical model. Along the side are five Christian cupids, carrying a long garland, of Roman style. These little nude figures with wings are not surpassed in loveliness by anything that the Renaissance had created up to this time, 1413-1419. However, it is the effigy of Ilaria herself that makes the tomb most worthy "as furnishing an instance of the exact and right mean between the rigidity and rudeness of the earlier monumental effigies, and the morbid imitation of life, sleep or death, of which the fashion has taken place in modern times."

Freeman in "Italian Sculpture" has written most beautifully of the figure: "The figure is one of the most beautiful in all sepulchral art. The head is



SCULPTURE



DELLA QUERCIA: TOMB OF ILARIA

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supported by pillows, the shoulders rest firmly on the slab, the arms lie quietly at full length with folded hands, the drapery, settled into long, still folds, covers the quiet limbs. There is no detail, from fallen eyelids to motionless feet, that does not contribute to the impression of a perfect repose which is neither the rigidity of death nor the relaxation of sleep, but perfect sculptural arrest. A round headdress, bound with sprays of conventionalized roses, makes, with the plaited hair, a frame for a face whose contours of brow, and cheek, and chin are most lovely, and which lifts itself above the curved collar covering the long throat as might a flower from its sheathing calyx. The repose of the figure, the simplicity of the drapery, the sweet delicacy of the features, fill one's sense with much tranquil pleasure, and suggest a possible and poetic type of woman. Is it a faithful portrait? Did so sweet a creature ever mate with the tyrannous and hated Lord of Lucca, and carry that flowerlike face into the midst of his roistering men-at-arms?"

Jacopo's last important work was the sculptured portal of St. Petronius at Bologna, where he left thirty-two half figures and fifteen reliefs. In many of these, there is an astonishing knowledge of the nude and a new portrayal of muscular movement of which Ghiberti and Donatello were both ignorant. It was not until Michelangelo appeared that any sculptor followed the road here traveled by della Quercia. When we recall that Michelangelo spent some months in Bologna just before he painted the Sis-

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tine Chapel, it is not strange that we discover many resemblances and see the same manner of thinking about the human figure. Jacopo was a worthy predecessor of Michelangelo.

We may now turn back to the competition of 1401 for the bronze doors of the Baptistry at Florence. The original panels submitted by Ghiberti and Brunelleschi are in the Bargello at Florence. Both of them are excellent in the filling of space. Brunelleschi has left more vacant space, his lines are more disjointed; and he gains in the carrying power of his design. To put it another way, the light and shade on the door is more interesting in Brunelleschi's than in Ghiberti's. On the other hand, Ghiberti's lines are flowing, and make better rhyme with their enclosing frame. Note the dominant diagonal that marks the line of rock. Compare the fulsome drapery of the angel in Brunelleschi's with the simple, rhyming lines of the foreshortened figure in Ghiberti's. See how graceful are the lines in the altar design of Ghiberti's.

When we pass from sensuous beauty into the realm of the experiential, at once the superiority of Ghiberti's design and conception is apparent, tho we are not at all sure that the Operai decided for Ghiberti on this ground. Abraham has been called upon to make a sacrifice of his own son. Father, son, and two attendants have gone up into the mountain, and the fatal hour is at hand. In Brunelleschi's panel, the father rushes at the throat of his son with all the frenzy of a fevered brain. The boy's neck and body are twisted by



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BRUNELLESCHI: SACRIFICE OF ISAAC



SCULPTURE



GHIBERTI: SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

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the onslaught of the would-be murderer; and the angel must come like a hurricane if he would be quick enough to stay the fanatic's hand.

In Ghiberti's, the father shows a father's feeling even tho he has accepted the divine command. He hesitates, as he looks into the beautiful, appealing face of his son. And only a gesture from the angel is necessary to deliver the father from his awful duty.

The contrast which is found in the main characters is found also in the accessories. In Brunelleschi's, the servants are busy, each with his own duties, without any regard for the murderous action that is taking place so near them. The donkey bites at the grass with all the vigor of a half-starved brute. In Ghiberti's, the two servants are thoughtfully and sympathetically talking of the dreadful demand that has been made on father and son. The donkey is no less an animal than the other, but he is not used to give a stronger wrench to our revolt against brute naturalism. To us of the twentieth century, there is no question regarding the superiority of Ghiberti's conception and the graceful flow of his lines.

Brunelleschi, defeated, gave his life mainly to architecture, and left his monument in the wonderful dome of the Florentine cathedral. Ghiberti's life was mainly given over to the making of bronze doors for the Baptistry. According to the best information we have, he worked on his first pair of doors from about 1403 to 1424, tho there are some who think that the first pair of doors was completed

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GHIBERTI: BRONZE DOORS OF BAPTISTRY, FIRST PAIR



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

much earlier. The general design is the same as that of Andrea Pisano: twenty-eight panels with horseshoe arches in each panel; but in details there are many differences. Ghiberti substituted a floral pattern for the old nail heads and conventional flowers. He substituted human heads for the lion heads at the corner of the panels. He used many more figures than did Pisano, and therefore his compositions are usually more crowded. He introduced perspective, that was just then being developed by Brunelleschi.

All these qualities are finely illustrated in the panel of Christ Bearing His Cross. How far back we seem to see in that left-hand corner! And what a great crowd follows on the way to Golgotha! In the Crucifixion, the graceful, flowing line that gave so much poetry to his competition panel, develops into a pattern that controls. The arms are not supports for a dead body, but curving lines that rhyme with the circles of the enclosing frame. In the same way the angels and the mourners are made a graceful part of the lines of the composition.

It is quite evident that a new spirit has come into art. The lure of graceful lines, the delights of perspective have made a pair of doors, which, even tho they are, in externals, quite like the early pair of Pisano, are full of a spirit that Pisano and his contemporaries felt but vaguely, the spirit of beauty.

Ghiberti's pair of doors was so successful that, upon their completion in 1425, he was given a commission for a second pair, which, at his death in 1455, was not quite finished. The subjects for this



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pair were chosen for the artist, but the general design seems to have been left to him. At all events, the general design is considerably different from that of the earlier doors. Whereas the older had twenty-eight panels, the new has but ten. Of course this al-



GHIBERTI: BRONZE DOORS OF BAPTISTRY; DETAIL, THE CRUCIFIXION

tered the shape and size of each. Ghiberti has also altered the border and framework. The moldings of the frames are heavier. A continuous band, or border, has been placed about the five panels of each door, which is relieved at various rhythmic intervals by the use of human figures and of heads in positions similar to those of the older doors. This continuity of design gives greater unity than one finds

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



GHIBERTI: BRONZE DOORS OF BAPTISTRY, SECOND PAIR

## SCULPTURE

in the older pair, but in this gain, there is also a loss; a loss of interest in the play of light and shade. Ghiberti seems to have depended for interest rather upon what is inside the panels than upon rhyming moldings and rhythmic light and shade. He depends upon a close inspection of his doors, rather than upon effect from a distance. One might question whether this is the proper attitude of mind for a maker of doors, whether Ghiberti has been any more successful in his general effects with this later pair than with his earlier, but it is certain that, in popular interest, he has gained more than he has lost.

All the scenes are from the Old Testament story; great events that affected Jewish history in a mighty way, tho they have not the intimate continuity of the doors of Pisano in the Life of John the Baptist. The subjects are: The Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, Noah, The Sacrifice of Isaac, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his Brethren, Mt. Sinai, Jericho, Battle against the Ammonites, and The Queen of Sheba.

The Garden of Eden makes a very distinct impression on one by the gracefulness of its line and the perfection of perspective. The dominant lines of the composition are those of a flowing inverted Y, which starts with the mighty hosts of angels at the top of the panel and passes in graceful curves to each of the lower corners. A hundred radial overtones relate themselves to these dominants, and make a composition conspicuous for the small number of straight lines. The relief is highest in the rugged mass at the bottom of the panel and the



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

body of Adam, partly in the round, and drops slowly thru the different groups until we come to the last of the angels just emerging by a sixteenth of an inch from the bronze background. It is a splendid example of the picturesque in bronze.



GHIBERTI: BRONZE DOORS, SECOND PAIR; DETAIL, GARDEN OF EDEN

Graceful line and perfect perspective are interesting in themselves, but when they are harmoniously related to the interpretation of an idea, they and the idea are both made more interesting. Here, at the lower left hand corner, we see the Almighty in the act of touching Adam into human



## SCULPTURE

consciousness. In the middle of the composition, Eve rises like a winged spirit along the dominant line to meet the Father, whose form and draperies help the direction of the other dominant. Stiff lines are on either side; on one, the palms of the garden, where Adam and Eve are failing; on the other, the gate of the Garden from which they are driven out forever. Above the whole hovers the angel group that unites the dominant lines and melts away into the infinity of the sky. In this composition that seems so simple except for numbers, Ghiberti has most skillfully woven together four different scenes. When we remember that, earlier, it was usual to put into one composition more than one scene without any regard to unity of effect, and that we find the same practice later than Ghiberti, we must give great credit to the artist for the use of the traditional in a thoroly artistic way.

The third panel from the top is the story of Jacob and Esau. It represents an even larger number of incidents than the panel at which we have just been looking. We can easily find six or seven phases of this story, and at the left a group which seems to have no direct connection with it. The larger part of the composition is taken up with architecture. One cannot help seeing this same interest in other panels; and one observes here and elsewhere the use of receding arches. The conclusion is forced that Ghiberti introduced these because he was interested in perspective, and because he had power to solve its problems well. There is no ques-

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

tion but that it is perfectly done. The only question need be, Was it justified?

Besides this interest in architecture and its perspective he has shown a fine interest in the beauty of the human figure. Note the one that occupies



GHIBERTI: BRONZE DOORS, SECOND PAIR; DETAIL, JACOB AND ESAU

the position of center of interest, Esau. Esau was a hunter, and, according to the original story, was very much of a primitive man, a man of the woods; but the young fellow that Ghiberti has introduced is dressed immaculately; his hair is curly; and he has taken just the right pose to reveal the graceful lines of his figure. Instead of a wild man of the woods, Ghiberti has given us an Italian gentleman who is most particular about his dress. Now note

## SCULPTURE

the group of women at the left. In all the years of the evolution of art, there are few figures comparable in grace of pose and beauty of drapery with the figure of the young woman whose back is toward us. But again we are compelled to ask whether we can justify the figure; for in no way was this group called for in the story which Ghiberti is illustrating. We are compelled to say it was not truth that drove Ghiberti on, but his love for grace of line and form.

If we should examine other panels of these beautiful doors, we should find the same qualities dominant. Ghiberti is a lover of sensuous beauty. He is willing to sacrifice truth of nature and truth of material to graceful line and wonderful perspective. The action of his figures is rather the correspondence of beautiful lines than a feeling for weight and mass. These predilections are dangerous in sculpture. Sculpture assumes the third dimension and actually uses it; painting gets it by the illusion of perspective. To introduce perspective, therefore, is to invade the realm of painting and to offend against truth of material. Further, to sacrifice truth of form for grace of line is to invite sentimentality, and to pass easily down the road toward degeneracy.

The Commission, nevertheless, was so pleased with this second pair of doors by Ghiberti that they removed his first pair from the position of honor at the east, to the north entrance, and replaced them by this second pair. The opinion of these men of the fifteenth century was echoed by



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Michelangelo later, when he said that these doors were fit to be the gates of Paradise; and all succeeding centuries have united in calling these the most admirable doors in art. Yet, after giving them all the unstinted praise of which they are worthy, one must admit that the tendencies and practices of Ghiberti were dangerous, and that art needed a stern corrective to save it from swift degeneracy. That corrective was at hand in the person of Donatello, the greatest sculptor of the fifteenth century.

### DONATELLO

He was born in Florence about 1386, the son of a wool comber who had been exiled for the part he took in the Ciompi riots. From his father's misfortunes, Donatello early learned to leave the game of politics alone. While he was associated with some of the foremost men of the state, never in any way did he meddle in political affairs. Vasari tells many interesting stories of his young manhood and particularly of his friendship with Brunelleschi. By the time he was twenty, he was enrolled as an independent sculptor, but his first work of importance did not come until 1411, when he was given a commission for the statue of St. Mark that now adorns one of the niches of Or San Michele. This was followed in a few years by his statue of St. George for the same building.

From this time on, he was constantly occupied with work that taxed his time and industry; so much so, that we have more than one record of com-



## SCULPTURE

plaint on the part of impatient patrons. Nor were these patrons unimportant individuals, but the authorities of the Cathedral and Or San Michele, or the great Cosimo de' Medici who was his constant patron and who bestowed the greatest affection upon him. In 1433, he was given the commission for one of the choir galleries of the Duomo. Perhaps it was during the exile of Cosimo that he made a visit to Rome, and was deeply impressed by the beauty of classical ornament and classical line. In 1443, he was engaged to superintend some restorations in San Antonio in Padua. While there, he was commissioned to erect an equestrian statue in honor of the soldier, Gattamelata,—the first equestrian bronze of the Renaissance. After his return from Padua, he was chiefly engaged for Cosimo in the church of San Lorenzo where there are two pulpits of his yet in position. At his death, 1466, he was buried, according to his request, in San Lorenzo, near the tomb of his great friend and patron.

One of the finest things that may be said about the man's character is, that all through his successful years, he kept the simple and kindly nature that had conferred upon him in his childhood the loving diminutive of Donatello instead of his more formal baptismal name of Donato.

While the main facts of the life and character of Donatello are well known, his range was so great, his art activities were so many that it is extremely difficult to date many of his important works; and therefore there is great diversity of opinion regard-

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

ing the development of his genius. It is generally agreed that we may find three fairly distinct periods in his art, corresponding to the main facts of his life. The first may be dated from the beginning of his activities to the year 1433. The second began with his visit to Rome in the year when his friend Cosimo de' Medici was an exile, and continued until his visit to Padua in 1443. A third is the ten years he spent mainly at Padua. Perhaps another might be his declining years, which he spent in work for San Lorenzo at Florence. To his first period belong such works as the St. Mark and St. George. To the spirit of the second belong the John the Baptist of the Bargello, the Zuccone, the Singing Gallery, and the David of the Bargello, tho it is possible that not all were executed between 1433 and 1443. To the third belong the Gattamelata and other works of his later years.

The St. Mark was the first of three statues for the church of Or San Michele. The commission was given to him in 1411 by the guild of the flax-weavers which, as one of the lesser guilds, could order a statue of marble only. Tho it was the first of those great portrait figures that characterized this period, it called forth the encomium of Michelangelo: "It would be hard to refuse the gospel of such a man". The head and face are clearly indicative of the thinker, while the keen eyes show an energy that drives. The pose is a trifle awkward; the hands are large and rough; the drapery has none of the clinging grace of a Ghiberti, tho one sees how easy it would be to

## SCULPTURE

straighten up the body and smooth out those folds into graceful lines, and pleasant light and shade. We feel that here is an artist who will in no way



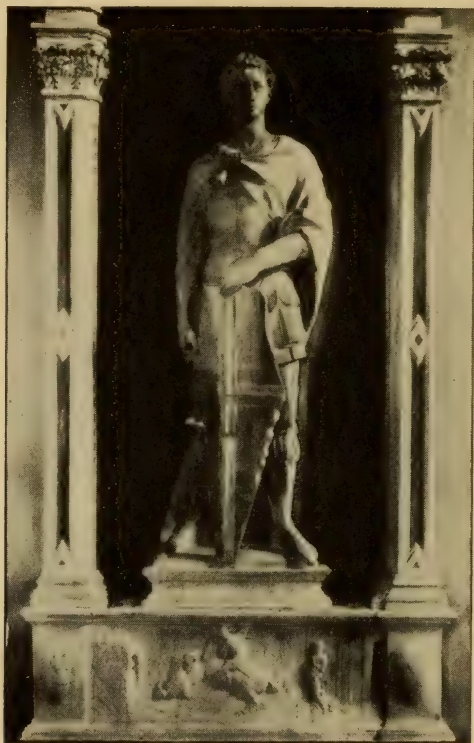
DONATELLO: ST. MARK

sacrifice truth of form; this must be obtained, even tho the price is beauty.

Some years later, the Armorers gave Donatello a commission for a statue of St. George, also for Or San Michele. The artist has represented

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

St. George as rather slight in figure, but he has given mass and stability to his statue by placing in front of the spindling legs the battle-scarred



DONATELLO: ST. GEORGE

shield, which fills the space and is a powerful character suggestion. The head is small but the face is radiant with courage and heroism. Nowhere is there any splendid charm of modeling, no wonderfully subtle lines, no Ghiberti grace; but a very



## SCULPTURE

simple theme worked out in a very direct way. One is reminded of the restraint and self-control of Greek art, while at the same time one catches all the vigor and enthusiasm of the Renaissance. Vasari well said, "He made a figure of St. George in armor, most life-like, in whose head is seen the beauty of youth, of courage and knightly valor, a vivacity terrible and audacious, and a marvelous gesture as tho the spirit stirred in the stone".

In 1433, Donatello visited Rome, staying there for about a year. Of course we should expect to find a wealth of classical motives as a result. We do; the classical is one of the distinctive elements in this second period of his art.

The David of the Bargello was the first nude statue in the round in the period of the Renaissance, or, indeed, since the time of the Romans, if we except figures which were used as architectural decorations. It seems to have been made as a study in pure form; for the idea of characterization is wholly absent except for the sword, and the head and helmet of Goliath under the foot of David. Classical lore is found in the decoration of the helmet where one sees a chariot drawn by cupids; and perhaps in the picturesque hat which is decorated with a garland of bay leaves.

The commission for the Singing Gallery was given to him in 1433, two years later than a similar commission to Luca della Robbia. Both galleries were placed over the doors of the sacristies, back of the altar in the cathedral at Florence, and remained there until 1688. At that time, they were removed as

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

being inadequate for the music at the marriage of the son of Cosimo III. They were carelessly laid aside, and considered of so little value that many of the

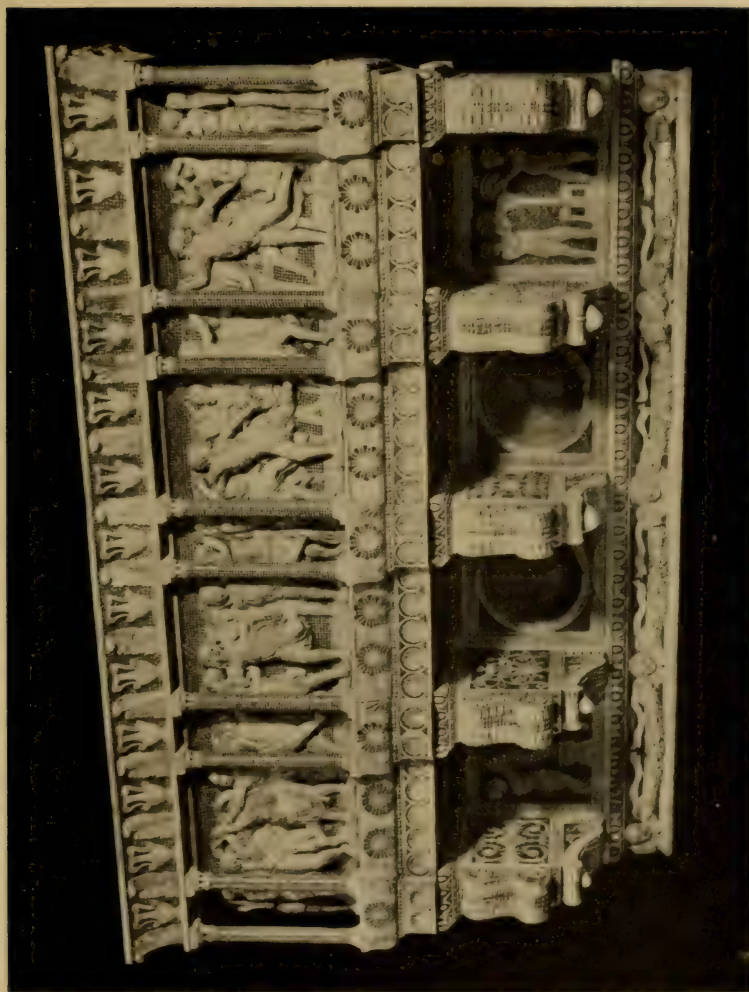


DONATELLO: DAVID, NUDE

parts were used for other purposes, and thus destroyed. In 1883, when they were restored, the figures in relief, the brackets, and one or two of the colonnettes were all that was left of Donatello's.

Donatello has borrowed much from the antique.

SCULPTURE



DONATELLO: SINGING GALLERY

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

The amphorae, the acanthus leaf, the columns, the rayed heads, the shells and even the children themselves are all borrowed from the classical; but they are used in a way that the classical would hardly recognize. Nowhere in ancient art did children romp as they do behind these pillars. Their freedom of movement, their laughing, shouting, dancing, their varied emotions, their freedom from consciousness of spectators,—all make a most charming impression of childhood. Thru Donatello, the child came into art.

As wall decoration, the Singing Gallery is extremely effective. The light and shade is most beautiful, and can only be fully appreciated when it is compared with its companion piece by della Robbia, in which the lack of shadows makes the design ineffective at a distance.]

If we accept the usual dates, we must place in this same period the Zuccone of the Campanile, and will discuss in this same connection the Mary Magdalene, and the John the Baptist of the Bargello, since they show the same temper and the dates are very uncertain.

By their ugly naturalism these statues are in so sharp contrast with the Mark and St. George of the first period, and the refined beauty of the Singing Gallery of this same period that one turns about to find an explanation. It is found, first, in the fact that the classic love of pure form which interests Donatello is akin to the spirit of scientific naturalism, that so often degenerates into ugliness. In the second place, it is found in the temperament of Donatello who has shown himself a most earnest seeker for truth of form.



## SCULPTURE

It would be strange if the temper of the young man did not strengthen in his maturer years. In the third place, the explanation is found in the fact that one of his most intimate friends was Brunelleschi and his greatest rival was Ghiberti. We must remember that by 1433, Ghiberti had finished his first pair of doors and was well on his way with designs for the second pair. No doubt the popular applause of graceful curves that were not true to the natural form stirred in the scientist and mathematician, Brunelleschi, a considerable contempt, especially as we know his temper was very positive. No doubt this friendship and this rivalry had its effect upon the already strong tendencies of Donatello, pushing him in his search after truth of form along the inevitable road that the naturalist travels when he sets himself in opposition to idealism, the road to the horrible and the ugly. The naturalist starts out to find the truth, but in justifying his tendency, he finds himself at the opposite extreme of the grace and sweetness of a Ghiberti.

The John the Baptist is the least ugly of the series, but, ugly or beautiful, it is true in essentials to the character it represents. John was an ascetic, a man apart from the world, a man who was self-centered so far as men were concerned, a zealot who crucified the body. His must be the body of one who lived on locusts and wild honey; his gait must be that of one who walked over uneven ground, who took the hills in an easy way. His eyes are not upon the lilies of the field, nor upon the graceful flight of the birds in the sky. He hears only the denunciation of

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

the prophets and sees only their vision of a new order. The statue is a fine characterization of a morbidly sensitive and tremendously zealous young man, who has in him a lot of nervous drive.



DONATELLO: JOHN THE BAPTIST

The Zuccone is generally supposed to represent King David, partly because it stands where once stood a David, and partly because there is no prophet, or other character of the Old Testament, whose

## SCULPTURE

name would better apply to it. The name Zuccone seems to have been a popular appellation, which Donatello himself accepted. As a matter of fact, it is not a "bald head," as the name signifies, but



DONATELLO: DAVID, IL ZUCCONI

the hair is thin and closely cropped. Whoever the statue may represent, it is a scientific study of the human body when it is worn, either by age, or by the continuance of some overwhelming emotion. Why

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

should it not be, to Donatello, the embodiment of that wasting and despondency that we know came to David after his great historic sin?

Donatello thought highly of this statue, for when he wished to give his word special solemnity, he would say, "By my Zuccone". Without the general explanation already given, the ugliness of the figure would be puzzling; with it, one understands that at one stage of Donatello's development, it is precisely what might be expected. The statue is horribly ugly, at best, but the usual reproduction intensifies this. Seen from the street below, the clumsy drapery, the gouged-out eyes, and the bony face do not produce the cadaverous impression that one gets from a photograph taken from the same level as the statue.

The Mary Magdalene of the Baptistry is the climax of this series in ugly naturalism. The head is only a skull, so fully have flesh and blood deserted the face. Her long hair, that once was beautiful, trails in disorder to her knees. Whatever garment she once wore is in tatters and dirt. Her feet, like her face, cry the story of starvation. Repentance has done what the medieval religionist would have called its "perfect work".

These statues are all extremely interesting, but are not examples of high art any more than the revolting naturalism of a murder story is literature or the wild swirling of the Dervishes is artistic dancing. In his protest against sacrifice of truth by Ghiberti, Donatello has gone to the other extreme that is just as dangerous to art.

In 1443, he was called to Padua on some work in



## SCULPTURE

the church of San Antonio. Here he was destined to make and leave his masterpiece. Here, freed from rivalry of opposing camps, and enthusiastic in the solution of a series of great problems, he reached the happy combination of naturalism and idealism in the world-renowned equestrian statue of Gattamelata. Gattamelata had been the general-in-chief of the Venetian forces, and the son, seeing no doubt the excellent work of Donatello, gave him, in 1446, the commission for a colossal statue in honor of his father.

The difficulties of the task were many. Donatello had no long line of traditions to which he might appeal. He might have seen the Marcus Aurelius when he was in Rome, and he undoubtedly could study the Greek horses in front of St. Mark's; but both of these were more than a thousand years old. No one in his time had made any study of the anatomy of the horse; all this had to be mastered by Donatello from first-hand knowledge. Besides, the problems of material and of bronze casting were comparatively new, and there was no knowledge or experience in the casting of bronze on so vast a scale.

No doubt this inadequate knowledge is the explanation of some unpleasant elements in the finished work. Fearing the strength of his material, Donatello has put a support under the upraised front foot of the horse. He has not been accurate in portraying the hind legs and hind quarters. But we are looking at the horse as Donatello never intended we should. He placed the horse and rider upon a tall

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



DONATELLO: GATTAMELATA

## SCULPTURE

pedestal, in a large open square, so that the silhouette against the sky loses much of the inaccuracy which we have noticed. It is unfair to Donatello to view his work from a scaffolding when it was intended to be seen from the square below.

The horse is a good specimen of the kind needed to carry a man with armor and to ride down the enemy. The rider is a cool but alert man, who carries his troops to victory by well-laid plans and persistent hammering, rather than by brilliancy in seizing unexpected opportunities, or personal dash on the field of battle. The greatest thing about either is that both are needed to make a unity. Horse and rider are one in type and composition. This very simple, but triumphant clarity of idea makes it difficult to realize the greatness of the work. The spectacular and the dramatic are so much more easily appreciated.

It is with regret that one omits many studies of children, like the boy Jesus, or of youths like St. Lawrence, or of strong men like Uzzano, but, from those which have been made, we may see the greatness of Donatello. He was a master of materials. He seemed equally at home in marble and in bronze. He was a master of the round, of high relief, and the most delicate of the low. In much of his work, one measures the relief in very small fractions of an inch, yet it is most wonderful in carrying the higher spiritual suggestions. His St. Cecilia is marvelously beautiful in both low relief and lofty characterization. He was an earnest student of the life of the spirit in man. In his best work, Donatello shows,



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

better than any other sculptor of the Renaissance save Michelangelo, that wonderful harmony of seeming contradictories that always marks the creative in art.

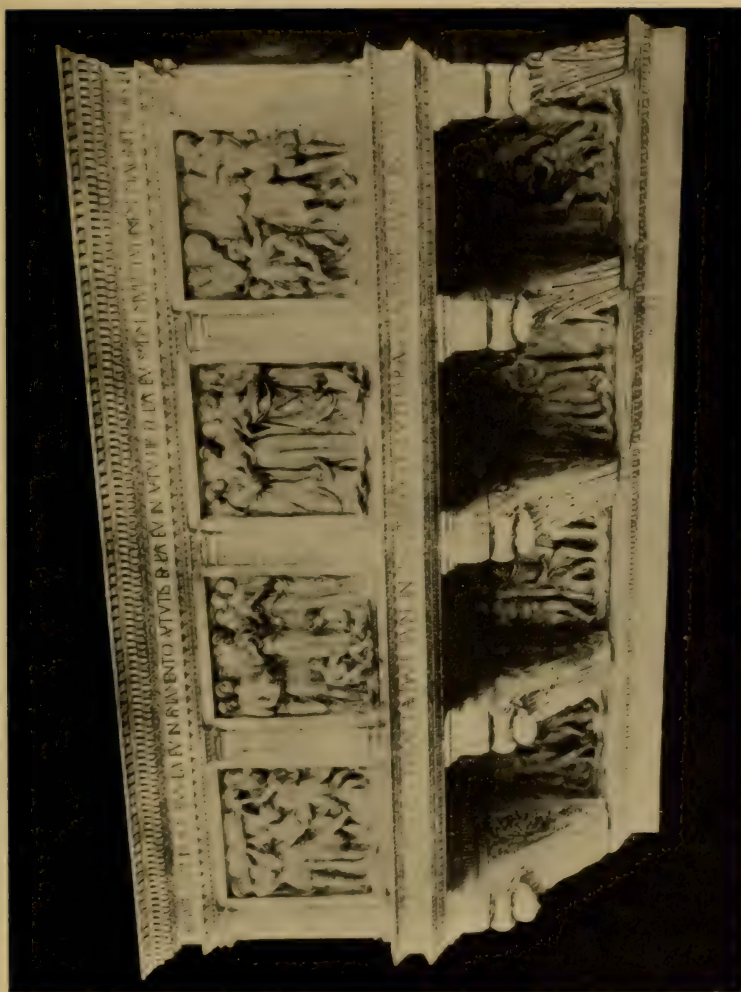
### LUCA DELLA ROBBIA

It is probable that Luca della Robbia, for much of his life, received more popular favor than did Donatello, tho in truth considerably inferior. At all events, he was a real rival. His masterpiece is the Singing Gallery, companion piece of Donatello's. Luca has carried up the lines of the brackets by means of Ionic pilasters and thus divided the front into eight panels. This framework is richly ornamented with classical motives of refined style. The lettering, or inscription, is most appropriate, both as a decorative element and to the idea of an organ loft. All the panels, including the two on the ends, are filled with children, either singing or playing musical instruments. While the motive is most appropriate to the decoration of a singing gallery, the relief is lacking in shadows and is comparatively uninteresting at a distance; but when one stands close, the panels are most animated: and tho the action may not be so vigorous and naturalistic as Donatello's, the result is better decoration.

One of the finest panels is the first at the left in the upper row. Contrasted with the earnestness of the boys with the horns is the abandon of the little girls in the middle. One of them is a veritable Bacchanalian. The composition has fine naturalism, while at the same time it is beautifully decorative. The



# SCULPTURE



LUCA DELLA ROBBIA: SINGING GALLERY

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



LUCA DELLA ROBBIÀ: SINGING GALLERY; DETAIL, UPPER PANEL AT LEFT

## SCULPTURE

cathedral authorities were so pleased with Luca's work that they paid him seventy florins instead of sixty which they had originally promised.

Luca's special claim to fame is his development of burned and glazed clay, as material for the sculptor. He was not the first to use a glaze for terra cotta, but it is claimed that he was the first to use tin glazes upon terra cotta figures. He made possible a wide use of sculptural forms for decoration, and his work became immensely popular.

At first, he confined himself to a blue ground with white figures in relief, but growing skill tempted him to the use of naturalistic green. In the hands of his followers, yellows, browns, and other colors were added until a color riot followed, and the art became degenerate. Some deservedly popular examples of della Robbia art are the "bambini" on the Foundlings' Hospital, tho they were done by Andrea della Robbia, not Luca.

### VERROCCHIO

The fourth great sculptor of this period was Verrocchio. He was one of those versatile characters that so abound at the time of the Renaissance, for he was a painter, sculptor, mathematician, and musician. In painting, he was noteworthy as a teacher rather than for productions, and numbered among his pupils Perugino, Lorenzo di Credi, and Leonardo da Vinci. His chief work was in sculpture, with the equestrian statue of Colleoni as his masterpiece.

Verrocchio was an experimentalist and a realist. In his David of the Bargello, we have a splendid



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

illustration of the scientist intent upon the naturalistic reproduction of a model, with little attention to the inner life that animates and informs the body.



VERROCCHIO: DAVID

The figure is awkward in its pose, or at best is seen to advantage from one position at the right. The left arm is akimbo, lean, flat, and without meaning. The right may "grasp the sword with menace and resolution", as one critic maintains, but the grasp



## SCULPTURE

is not one that has meaning in this particular situation. The fine shock of hair is needed to give mass to the head, but the curls are of a kind with the beautiful sandals and the fringed drapery. They are the characterization not of a shepherd boy, but of a model. If Verrocchio had omitted the head of Goliath, it would have been difficult to recognize the figure as David. Consider now the David of Michelangelo before the victory, and compare it with this David after his victory, and it is easy to see that, in this figure, Verrocchio lacks the imaginative quality.

But it was not always so. In the cortile of the Palazzo Vecchio is a little fountain, where once stood a David of Donatello. At the top of the fountain is a Boy and Dolphin. In this work, Verrocchio is in a playful mood. The little fellow swings on one foot while he holds fast to a wriggling dolphin, from whose mouth a jet of water rises in graceful curve and falls into the basin below. The masses are beautifully balanced, tho the motion is rapid. The body is naturalistic, tho decorative in its lines. Science is here permeated with imagination.

Late in his life, Verrocchio finished his Doubting Thomas for a niche in Or San Michele. The commission had been given some twenty years before, by the Guild of Merchants, which, having large judicial powers, had adopted as its patron saint Thomas, who had to have proof before he would believe.

The niche, built either by Donatello or Michelozzo, or both, is an elaborate one with two architec-

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

tural orders; the outer Corinthian, the inner Ionic. The theme required two figures. These crowd a niche that was intended for one, but Verrocchio has managed the problem with considerable success.



VERROCCHIO: BOY AND DOLPHIN

Another problem that faced him was how to get unity of interest while securing proper balance. He has turned the face and body of Jesus toward us; he has placed Thomas on a slightly lower plane.

## SCULPTURE

By masses, he has obtained symmetry; by lines, he has centered attention upon the wound in the side.

The masterpiece of Verrocchio is the equestrian statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni, tho the honor



VERROCCHIO: DOUBTING THOMAS

of the work must be shared with Leopardi, a Venetian who cast the statue in bronze after the death of Verrocchio, and is also responsible for the pedestal.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Colleoni was a native of Bergamo and lies buried there in the sumptuous state chapel designed by Amadeo. Having grown rich in the service of the Venetian state, he left it his fortune on condition that a statue of himself should be erected in St. Mark's Square. The authorities were glad to have his money but they wanted no statue in the square. If their desire was to keep the space untrammelled, it was commendable; but they were probably actuated in what they did by a determination that no man, even the dead, should lift his head above the level of the ruling oligarchy. They took the money and raised a statue in the square where St. Mark's school is located. Since many of the doges are buried in the church of St. John and Paul near by, Colleoni was honored tho not as his will intended.

But the greatness of the memorial depends not on its location; it is one of the greatest successes of its kind in all the domain of art. Indeed there is but one equestrian statue that any considerable number of competent judges would place above it, the Gattamelata of Donatello. One wonders how much the glamor of the name of Donatello and his pioneer work in this line have influenced this estimate.

Verrocchio's horse is better studied, has more of the truth of nature, is more interesting in its surface modeling, and is a happy mean between the stocky proportions of Donatello's and the lean lines of our great American example, the General Sherman of St. Gaudens.

Colleoni is characterized by a brilliancy, a cavalier dash, a swagger if you like, that perfectly befits the



SCULPTURE



VERROCCHIO: COLLEONI

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

successful leader in the campaigns of his century. And he sits his horse without the least suggestion of strain.

These two splendid parts, horse and rider, form a satisfying unity of lines and masses and are one in carrying a great dominant idea. They are full of that aggressive, confident spirit which led the doges and their people out of the huts of fishing villages into the palaces of the proudest city of the Mediterranean world. Does any other equestrian statue rise more completely out of the individual into the Universal?

### MINOR SCULPTORS

In the wake of these great masters, there are many workers who had neither the initiative nor the vision to put them in the lead, but who are splendid craftsmen. Five of these are in some respects superior, and represent many others.

Bernardo Rossellino, the earliest of these, did his chief work in 1444. This was the tomb of Leonardo Bruni, or Aretino, which adorns one of the walls of St. Croce. Bruni had been papal secretary, and secretary of the Florentine Republic. His tomb is comparatively simple in its general lines, but rich in decorative detail that takes its motive almost wholly from the classical. The tomb proper has strong rectangular lines, while the figures on the front give grace to the design. The body is in state, and special attention has been given to the mort cloth. The lunette space is well filled, but above the arch, the effect is heavy.

## SCULPTURE

Ten years later, Desiderio da Settignano placed upon the opposite wall, the tomb of Marsuppini, another secretary of the Republic. The lines are

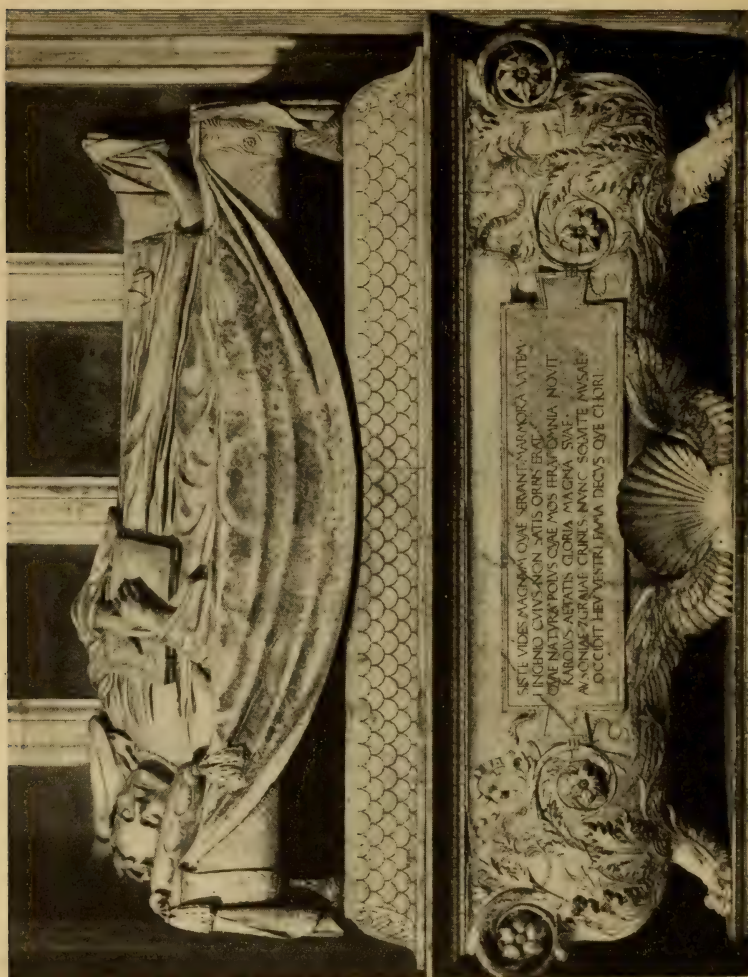


ROSSELLINO: TOMB OF BRUNETTI

more refined: the top is lighter; the ornament is similar in motive but much richer in effect. While one admits that the foliated ornament and the winged shell are simply perfect in craftsmanship, one feels that richness has been gained at the ex-



# THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



DESIDERIO DA SETTIGNANO: Tomb of Marsuppini, detail



## SCULPTURE

pense of the architectonic. Desiderio had an exquisite sense of the delicate gradations to which light and shade may be brought in marble.

Another famous tomb is that of Jacopo, Cardinal of Portugal, by Antonio Rossellino in San Miniato, Florence. The general design is not so good, but in contrast with the stillness of the dead, there is a vivid suggestion of life-to-be in the flying angels of the arch.

Mino da Fiesole was perhaps the most prolific artist of all the minor sculptors of this period, but since his charm is in delicacy of workmanship rather than in freshness of invention, the number of his works decreases his fame, for one feels strongly a fatal monotony. His deftness as a craftsman is perhaps better shown in works like the altar at Fiesole, but it is also well seen in his bust of Piero de' Medici, which has historic as well as art interest. Piero, at thirty-seven, is easily understandable, for Mino is no subtle interpreter of character.

In the sharpest sort of contrast with this portrait is the one of Mellini by Benedetto da Majano. Mellini is a great bundle of contradictories that make up large character. He is no doubt shrewd in making a bargain, but he is also kindly and merciful to the deserving. He is highly intellectual, but his emotions have also been thoughtfully educated. The bust is the work of a highly trained craftsman who is far superior to Mino in spiritual vision.

Benedetto is the maker of what is perhaps the most beautiful pulpit of the Renaissance. It is

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



BENEDETTO DA MAJANO: PULPIT, SANTA CROCE

## SCULPTURE

in St. Croce, attached to one of the great pillars of the nave, and was executed on the order of Melini, who stood, in some respects, as a patron of Benedetto. It is rich, very rich with classical ornament, carved with a hand which knew no imperfect lines nor unbeautiful surfaces, and never failed to do the bidding of the trained eye and delicate taste of the master. Stand off, and the pulpit will charm by its lines which drop gently into the pillar at its base. Approach, and it will charm with the delicate gradations of light and shade. Study, for the designs are most refined, and the reliefs of the life of St. Francis are full of beauty.

The pulpit was probably finished in 1495, at the very end of the Quattrocento. It shows some of the splendid accomplishments of the century. The artists have triumphed over their material. They are able to make it live, and they have, in some instances, given it a soul. Sculpture can go no farther and may "fare worse" if a prophet does not arise, who, forgetting the joy of stone-working and the petty rivalries of men, shall breathe into the stone the wonderful visions of his higher life. The world was ready for a Michelangelo.



## CHAPTER V

### THE NEW MOVEMENT IN PAINTING

A STUDY of the Quattrocento in sculpture has shown us a vigorous development thru the interest of the artists in the world of matter. That which a preceding age had proclaimed as the "world of the flesh and the devil" had become a subject of study, and finally a spectacle of beauty. The contrast between the age of Giotto and the Quattrocento has been finely put by Browning in his study of Fra Lippo Lippi. The prior speaks for Giotto and his time when he says:

"Your business is not to catch men with show,  
With homage to the perishable clay;  
But lift them over it, ignore it all.  
Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.  
Your business is to paint the souls of men.  
Give us no more of body than shows soul."

But Lippo voices the conclusions of the Quattrocento in saying:

"If you get simple beauty and naught else,  
You get about the best thing God invents:  
That's somewhat: and you will find the soul you  
have missed  
Within yourself, when you return him thanks."



## THE NEW MOVEMENT IN PAINTING

"This world's no blot for us,  
Nor blank; it means intensely and means good:  
To find its meaning is my meat and drink."

We shall expect then to find flesh painted at first because it is demanded as illustration, and later painted because it is thought glorious in its beauty. The hills and trees will take their place as the backgrounds of holy scenes, tho Nature will not find so loving an interpreter in Italy as Corot later became in the North. An interest in the life that now is will rival the interest of Christianity in the life that is to come. The truth of nature will gradually displace the authority of tradition.

But the painter has a very large problem to solve before he can present to us the truth of nature. His canvas has but two dimensions, length and breadth; nature is seen by us in three. The painter must somehow secure the illusion of depth, or thickness, before he can convey to us the impression of reality in figure or scene. He has learned to do this by employing the same means on his canvas that experience has taught us to use in human vision. Speaking in the large, the effects of depth, roundness, and distance are produced by converging lines, by the casting of shadows, by the dimming of visibility, or details, and by changes in the local color of objects. The greater the distance down the railroad track, the closer the rails seem to be, tho we know the distance between them is constant. Again, take the shadows out of a photograph and the face is flat. Again, travel away from a

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

forest; in time you can not distinguish the individual trees, and the green of the leaves will become violets and blues. The painter must recognize these facts and learn how to produce these illusions on canvas before he can pretend to represent the truth of nature.

The painters before 1400 seem to have recognized these facts, or some of them, very vaguely; but their psychological attitude and religious scruples were very unfavorable to any progress in developing a science of perspective. Had Giotto lived in the later age, he would no doubt have used, with sure touch, what he saw but very dimly in his own age. Brunelleschi, early in the Quattrocento, was the first to make a scientific statement regarding line perspective, and Masaccio the first painter consciously to obtain the effect of distance thru the dimming of details.

When once this knowledge of perspective became common property, artists seem to have been carried away on a flood tide of enthusiasm for its study and practice. Among many, Paolo Uccello illustrates the devotion that seized the painters. His *Battle of St. Egidio* is composed primarily to illustrate perspective. Spears are broken and disposed by the will of the artist to get the effect of converging lines. How wonderfully accommodating the warrior at the left has been in falling at the proper angle to illustrate the principle! Uccello is like a child with a new toy which absorbs his whole attention and energy. But his enthusiasm did not stop with perspective. His name Uccello, "Little Bird",

## THE NEW MOVEMENT IN PAINTING

shows that he was interested in the wide world of nature, birds and other animals. The realism in his painting of the Deluge would have been remarkable fifty years earlier, but, painted at the beginning of the Quattrocento, is only a good illustration of the spirit of the times.

Masolino may be cited as another example. In his Feast of Herod, it is very evident that the long



UCCELLO: BATTLE OF ST. EGIDIO

arcade has been introduced, not because it is an integral part of the theme, but because it afforded a fine opportunity for the practice of perspective. In the background are mountains that Masolino would omit if he had not begun to have an interest in the world of material. In the foreground are the precursors of the saints and madonnas that will soon be painted from models in the studios, rather than from age-formed traditions.



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Uccello and Masolino have been cited as pioneers; they are only prophets of the coming age; they did not learn how to take advantage of the new grammar of art in the creation of finished products. It is only the really great genius that can resist the lure of a new method, and make it an obedient servant to his larger purposes. The smaller mind is satisfied with the joys of the new process; the larger travails with compelling visions that can take form only in the words of the new language. It was the mind of Masaccio that first made the new craft a means to his larger purposes.

Of Masaccio's life almost nothing is known, and that little is not vital to our interpretation. It is the Brancacci Chapel in the church of the Carmine that rescues his name, and sounds his praises to the generations that followed him. In this little private chapel, the walls are covered with frescoes, chiefly from the life of St. Peter, though not all of them were painted by Masaccio. The most important of these is *The Tribute Money*. Like many of the earlier pictures, it is an attempt to combine in a single composition incidents that belong to different moments of time. In the middle, the tax-gatherer asks for money; at the left Peter takes the piece from the mouth of a fish; at the right the payment is made. The composition is successful in subordinating the minor scenes to the major thru importance in position, size, figures, and action.

This central group is well put together, even the composition in the third dimension. The figure drawing is perhaps the best so far noted; certainly



## THE NEW MOVEMENT IN PAINTING

the clothing better reveals the body beneath—it fits. The main characters are well individualized; in particular, the characters of Peter and Jesus are worthy. In the landscape, shadows have been used very effectively and the effects of atmosphere are carefully rendered. Trees and rock forms have been



MASACCIO: TRIBUTE MONEY; BRANCACCI CHAPEL, FLORENCE

observed, and an intelligent attempt made to embody the observations. Finally, while not failing in the spiritual significance of the theme he would illustrate, he has obtained more of material significance and reality than has been seen in any previous work.

In another work on the Brancacci walls, we have a portrayal of Peter Baptizing. The fresco has

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

suffered much with time, but its distinctive note of interest may still be clearly seen. It is the naked youth at the right. He stands shivering, waiting for his turn. Masaccio was under no compulsion to portray this young man nude; he might easily have thrown a cloak about him; but he is interested in a shivering body, as well as in the rite of baptism.

This interest in the nude, in the portrait, in the face and figure as conveying emotion and character; this interest in the problems of perspective in line and air, in the use of light and shade; in the remarkable co-ordination of all these as means of expression, are Masaccio's claim to greatness, and class him with other innovators and creators of his time, Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, and Donatello. When we recall that his frescoes in the Brancacci were the art school for Raphael, Michelangelo, and other great masters of the best period in Italian Art, Masaccio may well be called the great creative genius of the Quattrocento in painting.

While Masaccio was at work in the Carmine, it is possible that he was watched, if not assisted, by a monk who was destined to carry on many of his innovations. Fra Lippo Lippi, who dominates the second quarter of the Quattrocento in painting, developed a richer color than any of his predecessors. His saints and angels, most of them, are studied from life, and his madonnas are natural mothers, tho retaining many of the traditional attributes.

Lippo's temper and previous life made him very susceptible to the appeal of material. By his life

THE NEW MOVEMENT IN PAINTING



MASACCIO: PETER BAPTIZING; BRANCACCI CHAPEL, FLORENCE



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

as a beggar boy, he had developed sharp eyes and clear visualizing powers. He saw physical life much more truly than a Giotto, and caught something of the beauty that had escaped the more pious eyes of the earlier master. In his later life, his joy in things of sense and his love for a beautiful nun, Lucretia Buti, so scandalized the church and state that the pope felt compelled to give them a special dispensation to marry. It is said that the face of Lucretia appears in some of his pictures of the madonna.

His early work shows much of the piety and devotion of Giotto. His Annunciation is full of beautiful faces and tender sentiment. But there is also a tendency toward rich accessories, painted in clear, brilliant color. A love of architecture and splendid marble is very apparent.

About 1440, he painted the Coronation of the Virgin, the most important of his easel pictures. In this, it is very evident what the tendency toward realism and the interest in technical problems are accomplishing. The Coronation is a scene that must be thought of as taking place in heaven, but naturalism makes it a scene of earth, at some church altar. The angels are very material and very lovely. There is much exaltation of spirit, but you will note that Lippo is interested in having us see their faces. They are not the wan, emaciated type of asceticism, but the round and fat, full of physical life. Many faces and figures were taken, no doubt, from the people of Florence that walked and talked with Lippo. John the Baptist at the right, and Job and Ambrose at the left, look like flesh-and-blood Florentines. What a

## THE NEW MOVEMENT IN PAINTING

lovely youth with curly hair he has placed as an object of adoration in the foreground! And then, to cap it all, in the midst of all this heavenly host, there is Lippo himself, down in the corner at the right. To make us sure on this point, he has placed an inscription in Latin in front of himself, "Iste per-



LIPPO LIPPI: CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN

fecit opus". (This man did the work.) What presumption and effrontery this would have seemed to Giotto!

The Madonna, Child, and Angels, painted in 1457, shows more fully than the Coronation, the growth of the new realism. The traditional, the ecclesiastical, appears only in the remnant of a halo and the uplifted hands of the Madonna. She has come down out of the heavens and become a mother of the earth.

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Probably the model for this face was Lippo's wife, Lucretia. The children are now lovely little creatures to the painter. He puts in three where one



LIPPO LIPPI: MADONNA, CHILD, AND ANGELS

would suffice, and he appeals very definitely and directly to the spectator in the smile of the boy nearest us. How different from those far-away scenes of Giotto, which had no contact with actuality, and would have been thought impious if they had! Mate-



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riality and humanity are coming fast into art, and the old, unsophisticated piety is fading.

While Lippo and Masaccio were impatient with the demands of the old religious traditions,—the gold backgrounds, the formal angels, and the time-honored themes—and were making great advances in the material significance of things painted, some of the artists still maintained a reverent attitude toward the old religious conventions, while they slowly absorbed the new ideas and cautiously used the more adequate craft in color and perspective.

The most conspicuous of these conservative artists was Fra Angelico. The difference between him and Masaccio is chiefly a difference of emphasis. To Angelico, the old representations were precious, and to be handled sympathetically; to Masaccio the old aimed at the truth, but the form was so inadequate that it missed the truth, and must be cast aside. Masaccio is like a student, fresh from college, earnestly seeking after truth, and flouting the old forms. Angelico is a gentleman of the old school, upstanding, refined, in whose mind particular truths have been mellowed and merged into Universals. We are interested in Masaccio for his freshness and up-to-date appearance; we fondle the pictures of Angelico as we would an old wedding-dress, for its quaintness and fading beauty.

The common idea is that Angelico was untouched by the enthusiasm and problems that were engrossing the attention of other painters. Vasari is responsible for this conception. His stories that Angelico always went to work with prayer, that he changed

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

nothing, that he wept when painting crucifixions and last judgments, may have a large basis of fact, but the pictures of Angelico tell a story of a life that was always advancing in technical knowledge.

He was born near Florence in 1387. At twenty years of age, he joined the Dominicans at Fiesole, under the reform preaching of the order against loose living. For adherence to Gregory XII in the great papal dispute, he and his brother monks were exiled, but were allowed to come back after the dispute was settled in the Council of Constance. Their monastery fell into a bad state of repair, and Cosimo de' Medici, after his own exile, put San Marco into condition to receive them. From 1436 to 1447, San Marco was the home of Angelico. Then he was called to Rome by his old friend, Parantucelli, who had become Nicholas V, to carry out a decoration for the private chapel of the pope. The fact that he received a larger salary than the master architect of the pope, shows the high esteem in which he was held as an artist. In 1445, he died at Rome, and was buried in Santa Maria sopra Minerva.

Fra Angelico's art life falls easily into three periods: an early period, to which most of his easel pictures belong; the Florentine period, with the decorations of San Marco; and his work at Rome.

The pictures of the first period are full of a sense of unreality, but many have a fine decorative quality. The Madonna of the Star is an exquisite decoration. The Madonna of the Linajuoli is hardly flesh and blood, and is lacking in the miniature quality that is so lovely in many other pictures. The child is only

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a pretty doll. The background is laid in gold. The angels on the frame are delightful for their graceful lines and bright draperies. The Last Judgment is stiff



FRA ANGELICO: MADONNA DELLA LINAJUOLI

in composition. The row of graves down the middle of the picture is as simple as childhood; the conception of the devils is humorous, and the Hell at the right has long disappeared from our theology. The chorus of angels at the left is the only beauty of the picture.



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

In the Florentine period, we see a more mature artist and a more adequate technique. He has lost none of his religious spirit, but he has gained immensely in reality. His time was mainly devoted to the decoration of the bare walls of San Marco, the new home of his order. In the cloisters, the chapter house, and the cells upstairs, his labor of love is seen. No monk was so poor as not to have one of these now famous pictures.



FRA ANGELICO: LAST JUDGMENT

Most appropriately, he painted the Dominican Monks Welcoming Christ over the door of the guest room. The composition is made to fit its architectural frame, while the pilgrim's staff and the crossed hands form the sign of the cross. The face of Jesus has been painted with great care, is extremely refined, and far surpasses the drawing of the figure. Such anomalies are common in the work of Angelico. By the side of accurate drawing and delicate color, one may find crude color and awkward line.

## THE NEW MOVEMENT IN PAINTING

This anomaly is pronounced in the madonna of the Annunciation at the head of the main stairway. The face is highly spiritual, but the body under the drapery is formless. This body, however, is the only indifferent work in the whole picture. The angel is highly decorative in form, line, and color. The flowers and the outdoors are exquisite. The architecture is correct in perspective and true to the originals. The spaciousness of the whole, so charmingly finished by the little peep thru the window, is wonderful for the time. Lippo with all his worldliness never got this so well. It is very interesting to find Angelico seeing so truly and reproducing so accurately all those parts where we may assume he found significance in the material, and slighting material truth where it did not seem to minister to spiritual significance. Looked upon as an illustration of the theme, The Annunciation, the picture can hardly be surpassed.

While the Annunciation is probably Angelico's masterpiece from the viewpoint of delicacy and certainty in the treatment of the theme, nowhere is he profounder in his conception than in the Crucifixion in the chapter house of the monastery, the great room in which Romola, for the first time, meets Savonarola at the death of her brother, Dino. Here Angelico has taken the whole wall opposite the entrance to depict, not the materiality of the Crucifixion, but its spiritual significance. It is not the physical suffering of Jesus and the thieves that we see, but a great company of those who looked upon the Cross with eyes of faith from the centuries after.

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FRA ANGELICO: ANNUNCIATION, CORRIDOR OF SAN MARCO



## THE NEW MOVEMENT IN PAINTING

If one wants naturalism in the portrayal of the Crucifixion, Tintoretto may well wear the crown; if one wishes for its deep significance, Angelico's work must be considered.



FRA ANGELICO: ANNUNCIATION, CELL

As pure art, the picture is not so good as many others of Angelico's. First, it is too large a composition for him. He began essentially as a miniature painter, and always was most at home in that kind

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of work. Then the background is unfinished; an ugly red ground occupies the place of the sky. Further, the ecclesiastical obtrudes in the Dominican portraits at the base, the prophets on the arch, and the Dominicans and early Fathers in the picture. At the left we have Cosmo and Damian, patron saints



FRA ANGELICO: CRUCIFIXION

of the Medici, the patrons of the monastery. Then St. Lawrence and St. Mark. At the right of the group, at the foot of the cross, Dominic, Jerome, Francis, Ambrose, Augustine; at the extreme right, Thomas Aquinas and perhaps Angelico himself, weeping at his unworthiness.

The Roman period is for Angelico the best in tech-

## THE NEW MOVEMENT IN PAINTING

nical attainments, in giving material reality to his figures and accessories; but in this work for Nicholas V, we miss much of the mellow spirit of a fading past, and come upon old age that seems to be trying bravely to adapt itself to changing conditions.

In his best work Fra Angelico combined in a wonderful way the Saint and the Artist. His faces have a marvelous charm; the soul looks out thru a thin veil; the brute has vanished. At the same time, he was a careful student of the material human body. He was a lover of flowers and the outdoors. Strangest of all, he put more classical figures into his compositions than all his contemporaries combined. It is his glory that he, better than any other artist of his time, harmonized the ever-present contradictories in art, a high feeling for the spiritual and an enthusiastic interest in technique and the material.

Fra Angelico's most important associate was Benozzo Gozzoli. They worked together in Rome and at Orvieto, and the young Gozzoli was much influenced by the charm of the work of the older master. His best work is the Journey of the Magi, a wall decoration for a chapel in the Riccardi palace, the home of Cosimo de' Medici. It was painted to commemorate the church council of 1439 when the emperor of the Eastern Empire met the pope to consult him regarding the union of the eastern and western churches, and to take measures against the inroads of the Turks. The council had met in Ferrara, but so great was the influence of the Medici that it was adjourned to Florence.

In the foreground rides Lorenzo the Magnificent,



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soon to become the real ruler of Florence; behind him, on a white horse, Cosimo, at this time (1459) an old man. The procession winds through a Tuscan landscape where the hunter chases the deer. Green is the dominant color, against which the gold of the gay trappings stands out in fine contrast. Another part of this fresco shows us the Emperor of the East, John Paleologus, dressed in all the gorgeous trappings that pleased the passionate Orient. The detail is splendidly preserved, and makes us realize the color possibilities of fresco. As the attendant throws the rays of the electric light upon the various parts of this picture, they glisten like jewels, and change hues like an Oriental rug.

Gozzoli loved color and fine jewels; he loved the formal garden of the rich Italian noble. To him the faces of the Magi were far away and vague, while the faces of the Medici were interesting and real; the search of the Wise Men in distant Bethlehem became a pageant on the Italian hillsides. The spirit of piety that transfigured the work of Fra Angelico has lost itself in the worship of rich color, of winding roads and distant hills. By the middle of the century, the tendency toward realism and the methods of technique by which it may better be attained had become too strong and the Quattrocento produced no more Angelicoes. Instead, it continually perfected the media and processes of painting, and enlarged its knowledge of the material world.

## CHAPTER VI

### NEW PATRONS AND NEW THOUGHT

THE outstanding social fact of the Quattrocento was the growth of wealth, and its concentration in the hands of a few powerful families. The old nobility of birth was gradually supplanted by an aristocracy of wealth. The new nobility naturally became patrons of art, making new demands upon it, and definitely changing its course. It is idle to ask whether the result was best for art or not. The rich patron has always borne his share in its development, and when his wealth begins to fail, many forms must decline. Present-day complaints are quite beside the mark. We need, not less business, nor less wealth, but large-minded men, who know how to use their possessions for the public good.

The greatest family of Florence in this century was the Medici. Under them Florence rose to the pinnacle of its fame, and was ruled by them for quite three hundred years. They first figured prominently in the revolt of the Ciompi, when Salvestro was elected gonfaloniere, and carried thru the repeal of the "law of admonition". They became prosperous under Giovanni, who died in 1429. His son Cosimo, already mature with his forty years, greatly increased the family fortune by his successful operations in the

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Arte del Cambio, the guild of bankers. "He owned as many as sixteen banks in the most important centers of European commerce." To increase his popularity, he loaned money on easy terms to his townsmen, in some cases knowing that he could hardly expect the return of the loan. He spent money lavishly in beautifying the city of Florence, and in patronizing the artists. This generosity brought him the jealousy of the nobles and the ruling party, led by Rinaldo Albizzi. On the charge that his great power and ambition made him dangerous to the state, the gonfaloniere of 1433 proposed that Cosimo be exiled for five years. The law was passed, but Albizzi felt it was a crushing defeat. He was right. In a few months, the people were clamoring for the return of one whose purse lowered the taxes, lowered the rate of interest, and who was lavish in his expenditures for the public good. In less than a year, the law of ostracism was repealed. Cosimo came back stronger than ever, and the Albizzi were driven forever from power in Florence. Cosimo's wealth grew, and he spent it more lavishly. He patronized the arts more liberally; he rebuilt San Marco, and helped to rebuild the church of San Lorenzo. He built the great Riccardi palace as his home in Florence; he gathered about him such men as Brunelleschi, Donatello, Lippo Lippi, and kept their hands employed in various commissions for his private use, or for the church and city. Art had found a new patron; and his tastes and purse were henceforth to have a pronounced influence on its destinies.

The feeble health of Piero, next of the line, en-



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couraged the opposition to the power of the family. Luca Pitti attempted the same tactics that had been successful in Cosimo's career. Among other things, he built the Pitti Palace, now a great picture gallery and the home of the king when he visits Florence; but his fortune was not equal to the demands upon it, and he became bankrupt, both in purse and influence.

At the death of Piero in 1469, the leadership of the Medici fortunes fell to the sons of Piero, Lorenzo, 21, and his brother Giuliano, four years younger. These very young men soon showed all the astuteness of their grandfather Cosimo. They strengthened their hold on the government of Florence by centralizing it still more. They enlarged their family and political influence by arranging or disapproving marriages of important personages; for the family relation was the real foundation of party relation in Florence, a comparatively small community. They strengthened the foreign relations of Florence until the state commanded the respect paid to others of far larger territory and population.

The power of the Medici, and their popularity as well, aroused the envy of the pope, Sixtus IV, who was anxious to restore the influence of Rome and was balked by the glory of Florence. Working thru the Pazzi family, who were allied by marriage to the Medici, he incited a conspiracy whose final aim was the assassination of the Medici. More than once the attempt failed, by the prudence of Lorenzo and Giuliano. It was finally decided that the only place where they could catch the young men together, and at the same time off their guard, was at church.

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Cardinal Riario, a nephew of Sixtus and a relative of the Pazzi, asked permission to celebrate High Mass on Easter Day at the cathedral, and got the definite assent of the two brothers to attend. At the moment the host was elevated, the blows were struck. Giuliano fell, but Lorenzo, tho wounded, escaped to the Sacristy a few feet away. Devoted friends barred the door, sucked the wounds for fear of poison, and roused the populace to a frenzy of revenge. That Easter Day was bloody in Florence; and before it ended, the bodies of many of the conspirators were hanging from the windows of the Palazzo Vecchio. Lorenzo stood higher than ever in the esteem of the people.

But the plot was not ended. The powerful King of Naples was incited to quarrel with Florence, and a disastrous war seemed to be imminent. Lorenzo met the situation bravely. Telling the people that he was the cause of all the trouble, he announced that he would go in person to the King of Naples, and either find some basis of settlement, or perish in the attempt. He went, tho he was told that he would be thrown into prison and perish miserably, but the cool brain and the tactful persuasion of Lorenzo triumphed again over intrigue and power. He returned to Florence a hero, and was hailed as the savior of his country.

In the midst of this intrigue, murder, and war, Lorenzo maintained a great enthusiasm for the arts; patronized the artists, both those who had established a reputation and those young men who gave promise of doing great things. He continued the work of Cosimo in gathering ancient manuscripts, of enlarg-

## NEW PATRONS AND NEW THOUGHT

ing the Laurentian library, and gathered what was perhaps the first collection of ancient statuary since the time of the Romans. He added monuments and buildings to the city; he fostered its industrial and financial prosperity; and proved himself one of the most enlightened rulers that ever by usurpation or by right, held the prosperity of a city in his grasp. It is not strange that his fellow citizens called him Lorenzo the Magnificent, the greatest of the Medici. With his death in 1492, different ideas and far different personalities came to the front in Florence.

We have seen that the wealthy families, and especially the Medici, were the new patrons of art; and that their money and their tastes affected art as much as the patronage of the church and the guild. But there was still another influence, strong in the days of Cosimo, of which only incidental mention has been made. It is the introduction of new thought and a new point of view by a revival of interest in the old Latin and Greek literatures. We call this the Classical Revival.

It is usually said that the Classical Revival was the cause and beginning of the Renaissance. This is not true; the Renaissance was in being many years before the revival of the Classics. People are not often interested in the past until they are interested in the present. Life became vigorous and then it wanted to know about its ancestors. This knowledge quickened life, it is true, but was not the cause of it. The great driving cause was the awakened Christian consciousness.

Petrarch who lived in the last days of Giotto is



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the first person of importance to be interested in Classical literature, or rather to push an interest in Latin; he knew no Greek. He owned a copy of Homer, but could not read it. For his ease in writing different Latin styles and unbounded enthusiasm for the literature, he was acknowledged the first scholar of Italy, and was crowned with the civic crown at Rome on the Capitoline.

The revival of interest in Greek sprang to life with the coming of Chrysoloras, who was reputed to be the most erudite Hellenist of his age. The Byzantine emperor, hard pressed by the Turks, had sent Chrysoloras and Kydonios west to ask the help of Christian states. Florentine ambassadors who met them at Venice were so charmed by their culture that they were filled with a passionate desire to have Chrysoloras lecture in Florence. Thru the influence of the great humanists, Palla Strozzi and Niccolo Niccoli, the signory voted a good yearly sum for a Greek chair at the University. The new professor came. At his opening lecture the enthusiasm was so great that he wept for joy.

Into the current of this new enthusiasm, Cosimo de' Medici had been carried. He soon saw the far-reaching effects that were to come from the New Thought, and gave the movement his personal interest and patronage. He placed his purse at the disposal of more than one manuscript collector, and all the correspondents of the Medici banks were instructed to purchase choice relics of antiquity without regard to cost. Under the influence of Pletho, he founded the Academy of Plato, and in time ac-

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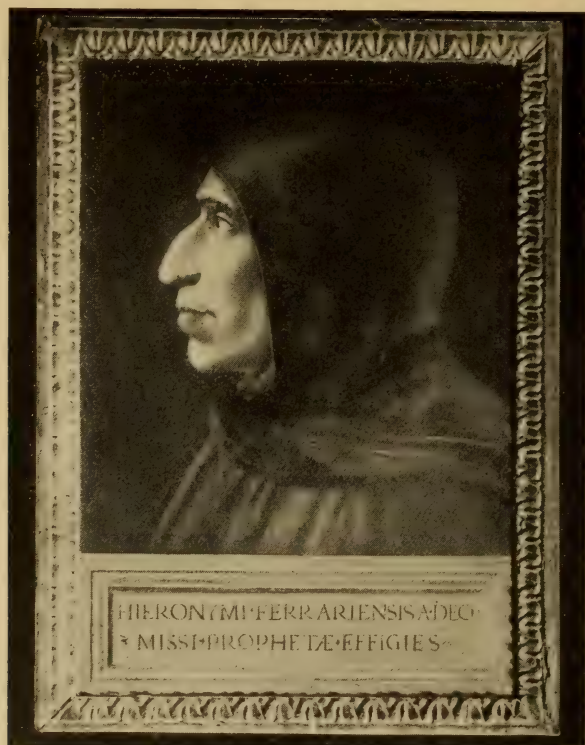
cepted Platonism as the panacea for the ills of life. He settled a stated yearly sum on Ficino, who was to be a sort of high priest of the new cult, and died listening to the words of "the one philosopher."

After him, Lorenzo the Magnificent was also an earnest patron of the new thought. Florence became a second Athens where the culture of Greece had all the lustiness of perennial youth. Plato and Aristotle could hardly have had more influence in their homeland than they had in the learned circles of the late Quattrocento. As the century grew old, the confident faith of Giotto and his pious devotion appeared to be as outgrown as his untutored technique. High church officials lost their childhood fervor, and even the popes were patrons of the new thought. Men had cut loose from their old moorings; they were drifting out to sea. A change of wind was necessary; a warning voice to tell them of their peril. That was the voice of Savonarola, the John the Baptist of the century.

Girolamo Savonarola was born at Ferrara in 1452. He grew up a solitary boy, finding his companionship in the music of his lute. When his parents insisted on his becoming a physician, he secretly left home and joined the Dominicans. Rising into a certain amount of prominence among the monks, he drifted to Florence, where he became a teacher, but not a successful preacher. It was not his day, and he had not learned his message. Off in Lombardy, he found himself. The fame of the great preacher reached the ears of Lorenzo de' Medici. There is no greater tribute to the catholicity and freedom of

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Lorenzo than his invitation to Savonarola to come back to Florence. He could not help knowing that it was the call to repentance which was bringing fame



BARTOLOMEO: SAVONAROLA

to the monk's name; he could not help knowing that the preacher would attack the un-Christian tendencies of much that was called culture in Florence.

His preaching was highly sensational and bold. He said that Plato and Aristotle were in hell; that any



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old woman knew better than they in matters of faith. He made a strong appeal to the feeling of terror and dread. He proclaimed a terrible catastrophe for Florence, in his generation, if the city did not repent of its evil ways. He claimed to say these things, not as other people might say them, but with the authority that came from conference with God and the angels in visions. He proclaimed himself a prophet and a mystic.

It is not strange that great crowds waited for hours to gain admission to the cathedral. He stirred the latent righteousness of the Florentines. In their enthusiasm for the new thought and larger culture, Christianity had been neglected, but not scorned. Then, as always, the sense of rightness was the mainspring of human action. They had just lost perspective. When, therefore, the voice of Savonarola called them back to a life of righteousness, the response was instant and complete.

In 1491, he was made prior of San Marco. This, you will remember, was the monastery which had been refitted by Cosimo for the Dominicans in the time of Fra Angelico. For this reason, it had been the custom for the new prior to make a formal call, after his induction into office, upon the head of the family of the Medici. Savonarola refused this visit to Lorenzo. There seems to have been no open break between them, but each went his own way, Lorenzo tolerant, and Savonarola proud. In 1492, Savonarola was called to the bedside of the dying Lorenzo to give him absolution. Of the dying man he demanded three things; a confession of his faith in

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God, the restoration of any riches which had been acquired unjustly, and the restoration of the liberties of Florence. To the first two Lorenzo assented, but said that the third was out of his power. And the story goes that Savonarola refused to administer the last rites of the church.



SAVONAROLA'S CELL, SAN MARCO, FLORENCE

When the French invaded the city in 1494, the catastrophe seemed the simple fulfillment of the predictions of the prophet. The people rallied to his support; Piero was expelled; and Savonarola became all-powerful. He then proposed a new constitution, and in so doing, became a politician. In order that the government might become more Christian, he

## NEW PATRONS AND NEW THOUGHT

proposed that Jesus be proclaimed King of Florence. His whole program seems to have been one of reform, with universal peace and the general welfare as the cardinal principles.

However, his ideas of religion made his politics highly impractical. He said that the voter should pray in case of doubt and then cast his bean without looking to see which kind he voted; for God would direct his choice. He so mixed his politics and religion, that his political opponents became sinners against religion, and received his severest denunciation.

Of course there was bound to be a reaction. The invasion of the French, which had seemed the fulfillment of prophecy, caused the loss of Pisa, one of the richest possessions of Florence. A wasting war followed. The harvest failed, and thousands died of famine and starvation. There were plots for the restoration of the Medici, and two of the plotters, rightly or wrongly, were hanged without the right of appeal. Savonarola no longer seemed the voice of God. Through the influence of the Medici and envy of the power of the haughty monk, the pope became an opponent, and hurled the ban of excommunication. Savonarola replied with denunciations of the pope. Then came a demand, both from the pope and the council of Florence, that the monk cease preaching.

He answered by demanding a general council of the church. The quarrel between the followers of the two sides became so warm, that one proposed, and the other accepted, a "trial by fire". The crowd gathered in the Piazza; but while the monks argued



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about whether they might wear their robes and carry a crucifix into the fire, a storm came up, and scattered the angry crowd to their homes. In a few hours a mob stormed San Marco, dragged from its quiet precincts him who had once seemed their prophet, and saw him placed for safety in the high tower of the Palazzo Vecchio. After bodily torture and weeks of mental suffering, Savonarola was finally condemned to be hanged and burned in the great central square of Florence.

Whatever may be our judgment as to the merits or demerits of Savonarola, we must at least recognize that here was a voice calling his generation to a realization of its wanderings, and bringing once more into consciousness the figure of the Crucified as more excellent than the figures of Plato and the old Greek philosophers. And he triumphed, tho he seemed to fail.

His influence on Florentine art was most important. The artist is a child of his time; he reflects the dominant ideas and spirit of his generation; these are the materials, or a large part of them, with which creative genius works. In the days before Savonarola, the painter had become enamored with classical motives. Columns and arches appeared in his backgrounds; classical costumes adorned his figures; and his whole turn of thought was fast becoming pagan. He was losing the great religious inspiration of the early days, and, tho he knew it not, was approaching sterility of ideas and days of decline. But when the thunders of Savonarola smote his ears and heart, he awoke to a new meaning of the Christian theme. Without

## NEW PATRONS AND NEW THOUGHT

Savonarola, the High Renaissance might never have come to pass. Without the prophet, Michelangelo would hardly have been great; he might easily have been grotesque. Without him, Christian art would have been blasted as a half-blown rose. The greatest period of Italian art would have been the Quattrocento.

The artist who best represents the changes that took place in the last half of the century under the influence of the New Learning and Savonarola, is Sandro Botticelli. Born in 1447, apprenticed to a goldsmith, trained under Lippo Lippi, patronized by Lorenzo, he was heir to the best in art, and was in contact with those who loved the beauty of a by-gone literature and felt the poetry of the Greek religion.

His earliest picture, the Adoration of the Magi, distinctly shows the influence of Lippo and naturalism. In a strange combination of nature forms and classical ruins, the Medici and their friends become the Wise Men of the East, bringing gifts to the Child and his Mother. The picture seems to have been painted to do honor to old Cosimo, who died in 1464, and is represented as kneeling directly before the Child. It is the religious genre of Lippo, tho much superior. Instead of painting people on display, as Lippo did in his Coronation, or making them an impertinence to the main action, as Ghirlandajo did in the Sacrifice of Zacharias, the bystanders are a distinct help in the realization of the action, and are masterly in characterization. The coherence of the composition is excellent.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

In his *Madonna of the Magnificat*, he combines naturalism with a poetic feeling for the spiritual. The soft melancholy of the Madonna is in happy contrast with the vivacity of the group about her.



BOTTICELLI: ADORATION OF THE MAGI

Delicately, but surely, the figures have been adjusted to the tondo form of composition, and fitted like petals to the heart of the rose,—that delightful bit of land and sky. One wonders if this is not the first time in Italian art that a bit of nature has been made the center of attention. Botticelli is not here profoundly Christian, but he reveals a mind that loves melody in whatever guise it appears.



## NEW PATRONS AND NEW THOUGHT

It was but natural then, that he should fall under the spell of Greek myth, with an imaginative quality as unfettered as the fauns and satyrs of the forest, and color as delicate as faded rose leaves. Some of



BOTTICELLI: MADONNA OF THE MAGNIFICAT

the stories he seized upon as joyous material for his brush. In his version of Spring, or *Prima Vera*, it is thought he had a passage from the Latin poet Lucretius, as his basic motive. His chief interest seems to

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



BOTTICELLI: SPRING

## NEW PATRONS AND NEW THOUGHT

be an involved symbolism. Probably the most consistent explanation is that the central figure is Venus, goddess of birth and life. At the left, the Three Graces dance, while Mercury clears the skies. At the right, the Goddess of Spring spreads flowers in her path, followed by Flora and Zephyr. Above her, blind Cupid shoots his arrows among the orange trees. Aside from the symbolism, our interest is centered in the picture as a decorative study. There is a warp of strong, straight, lines and a woof of subtle curves in swaying figure and flying drapery.

The Birth of Venus was probably painted a few years later. At all events, Botticelli's technique and temperament are more adequately represented.

He felt the poetry of that old myth which tells us that the goddess of love was born of the foam of the sea. A naturalist would have had no interest in the story, or if he had, would have given us a very substantial

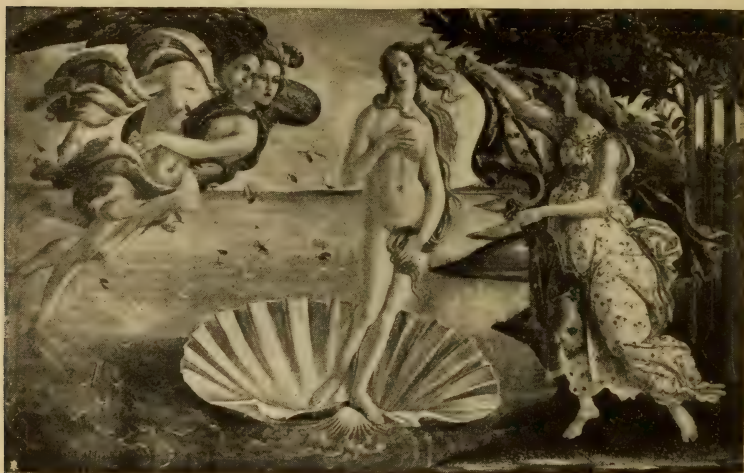


BOTTICELLI: SPRING, DETAIL



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Venus stretched upon the sand. Botticelli is not a naturalist; he is a poet and a decorator. He is here interested in the truth of nature only enough to make the story intelligible. He is interested chiefly in an arabesque of lines and values. His waves are only points on a flat surface. The land and the trees are, to him, only lines in a pattern.



BOTTICELLI: BIRTH OF VENUS

And yet,—how much of life and motion he has suggested! One feels the power of the wind against the draperies. One catches the swift motion of the Zephyrs. The shell dances as lightly as a chip on the waves, and the figure of Venus is vibrant with delicate poise. Compare this work with Cabanel's sophisticated production of the nineteenth century, and feel the superiority of this decorative study.

One could wish that there were no doubt about the

## NEW PATRONS AND NEW THOUGHT

attribution to Botticelli of the Madonna, Child, and Angels of the London gallery, but it is agreed that it was painted either by him or one of his followers, and is in accord with his development.

The composition is simple, and the parts are in perfect rhyme with the tondo shape. Mary, in full front view, is the line of stability. She is a very fine type, and is distinctive among the women chosen by the Italian artists for their madonnas.

The attitude of mind which produced this picture was very different from that of the preceding. Those we have seen have been full of the Greek spirit, or else have been faded roses of the Christian. Botticelli saw the loveliness and felt the poetry of both, but neither had brought to him a quickening faith that drives to action. This picture has all the religious fervor of an Angelico, and the spiritual insight of a Giotto. There is but one explanation; it is the message of Savonarola. Botticelli has heard the voice calling its generation back to simplicity and sincerity, and the appeal has produced a profound effect upon the soul of the poet painter. Life has become tremendously significant with Christianity as its most vital interpretation. The Madonna and Child theme is no longer faded roses; it blooms again with life-giving faith.

It is well, at this point, to inquire more concretely into the significance of this theme, which occupied so much of the attention of those who were interpreting the Christian story. If the Madonna and Child were nothing but color and line, a pretty child and a sweet mother, it would never have received this

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

attention. Because we, too, recognize that this theme has deep import, only a few of the many versions are regarded with favor. There are yet too many so regarded.



BOTTICELLI: MADONNA, CHILD, AND ANGELS, LONDON

When we analyze the feeling of motherhood, we find a large element of the joy of possession, which of course easily runs over into an attitude of selfishness. The mother is happiest when she cuddles the



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baby close to her own bosom, and revels in the sense of personal possession. Raphael's Madonna of the Chair is a good illustration of this idea.

This, however, is only the low plain of physical motherhood; the madonna dwells in the heights. It is demanded of few, and in the Christian sense of but one, to nurture a child whom she loved as other mothers loved, and at the same time, to realize that he was not her own; that he was given her against that day when she should offer up her love, and he his life, for men and women who did not, perhaps could not, appreciate her love and sacrifice. It was just because the church early felt the supreme sacrifice of Mary, that it thought of her as a peculiar personality, and implored her help in all the affairs of life. Any interpretation of the madonna that does not suggest this sacrificial attitude of the mother, is earthly and unsatisfying, however well it may be painted.

Turn now to Botticelli's picture, and see how fully he has suggested this attitude of mind. He does not distract us with a landscape, however beautiful. The angels are serious and worshipful, in contrast with the vivacious creatures of the Madonna of the Magnificat. He has recurred to the old-fashioned halos. And the mother! No soft melancholy and no selfish cuddling here. In that moment of closest physical relationship, a far-off look comes into her eyes, and she almost timidly holds the babe to her breast. The great thought possesses her soul: "He is mine to nourish and to cherish, but not to hold close in selfish love. He is the world's child. How

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BOTTICELLI: MADONNA, CHILD, AND ANGELS, LONDON, DETAIL

## NEW PATRONS AND NEW THOUGHT

unworthy I am of the tremendous responsibility with which I have been honored." There are few finer interpretations than this in all the range of art.

Thus Botticelli traversed and reflected the rapid changes in thought and art in the last half of the Quattrocento. His early madonnas are painted in the traditions of his teacher, Lippo Lippi, tho with a poetic temperament that Lippo never possessed. His middle period is filled with classical themes which show his enthusiasm for the spirit of Humanism. His latest works reveal a return to a simpler and more sincere faith in Christian ideals. He connotes a great synthesis, the combination of a perfected technique, with a renewed enthusiasm for the time-spirit that has been driving the age on to achievements. Upon the crest of this wave of enthusiasm, Raphael and Michelangelo were carried to heights others could not achieve. The Golden Age of Central Italian art was now possible.

Of course Botticelli's contemporaries were affected by these changing conditions and interests, but they add nothing to our knowledge of the evolution. A brief mention of some of them will be sufficient.

Filippino Lippi, a son of Lippo Lippi, was a pupil of Botticelli's. He is probably seen at his best in an altarpiece of the Badia, *The Vision of St. Bernard*. Here he shows that he has caught much of the spirit of his master. The Madonna has much that reminds us of the Magnificat, with a touch of vitality that the Magnificat has not.

Piero di Cosimo was a conspicuous painter of classical themes. Not a blind follower of an original,



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he drew upon his fancy, created strange landscapes, and peopled them with stranger dragons and grotesques. His Perseus and Andromeda of the Uffizzi is a fine example of his spirit. The dragon occu-



PIERO DI COSIMO: PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA

pies a part of the composition, disproportionate for any purpose except a child's fairy tale. Perseus seems ridiculously inadequate for his part as the hero who overcomes the monster. Piero does not take the original story seriously, but treats it in that quaint, eccentric temper, which, according to Vasari, characterized all his work.

Domenico Ghirlandajo was the chief rival of Botticelli and was in high favor during his lifetime. Primarily a fresco painter, he has left large works in the churches of S. Trinita and Santa Maria Novella in Florence. His pictures always give one the impression that he is master of his material, working

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out his compositions in a thoroughly ordered way; but this very methodical method in which he approaches everything leaves one's emotions perfectly calm. He is quite uninspired; he has no poetic sense; his



GHIRLANDAJO: ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS

appeal is to the intellect. Even his color is disappointing. It is always correct, but cold. It has neither the richness of Lippo, nor the glitter of Gozzoli. His pictures show his great interest in things classical. For example, in his Adoration of

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

the Shepherds, a Roman sarcophagus, pilasters, and a triumphal arch are prominent objects in the composition. In this same picture, one sees Ghirlandajo



GHIRLANDAJO: CHOIR OF SANTA MARIA NOVELLA, DETAIL; DAUGHTER OF THE TORNABUONI

at his best in the portraits of the two shepherds. One must say they are living figures. His great contribution to art, however, was not his painting, but the sound training he gave in his bottega to many a promising young artist, among whom was the boy Michelangelo.

The Quattrocento was a wonderful century. It inherited the traditions of Giotto. It plunged into a deep and pervasive enthusiasm for the world of the present, with all its manifold interests

and beauty. Then it turned its attention to the world of the past, and fell in love with its wonderful poetry and philosophy. Humanism was so attractive and its thought was so fresh, as contrasted with the formalism of the church, that many an artist sneered



## NEW PATRONS AND NEW THOUGHT

at the Christian story, or at best was indifferent to it. Savonarola, with his mysticism and oratory, swept the Florentines back into old channels of thought, and art and life grew richer in the process.

The mechanics of art, particularly painting, had been vastly improved. The epoch-making knowledge of perspective had come with the century. Methods of applying color had been changed and brilliancy of effect increased. The use of oil came in at the end. The nude figure became an increasingly interesting study for the painter. To find out about the interaction of muscles in face and body, dissection began to be practiced by such earnest students as the Pollajuoli. They sketched muscles in various states of tension, and observed carefully what were involved in various bodily activities. Their work was far from beautiful, but it added greatly to the equipment of their fellow artists.

The century put into the hands of its heir, the Cinquecento, a mellowed but vital inspiration and ideal, a reverent Christianity that knew something of the mysteries of the natural world, and longed to know more. It also handed over to its successor, processes and materials by which one mind could convey to another some of the glory of the vision which inspired and enriched. Giotto was reverent, but he knew neither nature nor an adequate technique. Michelangelo was reverent, and the heir of all the riches of the Quattrocento. Giotto was fettered; Michelangelo was free.

## CHAPTER VII

### UMBRIAN PAINTING IN THE QUATTROCENTO

THE art of the Quattrocento in Central Italy, outside of Florence, is practically confined to Umbria. Siena, which had been active in the preceding century, produced no master in this who made even a slight contribution to the development of art. Matteo di Siena was of some local importance, but he followed in the way of preceding generations. Neither did the city of Rome become a center of discovery and improvement. The popes had too recently returned from the "Babylonian Captivity" at Avignon. It took many years for them to restore political and social order, and many more for them to gather the money which could be spent in patronage of the artists. Not until the reign of Sixtus IV was art important at Rome, and then the work was done with artists borrowed from cities farther north, in Tuscany and Umbria.

Umbria is a mountain province, having no sea-coast, boasting as its largest streams the headwaters of the Tiber. Its important cities—Perugia, Assisi, Foligno, Spoleto, Fabriano—are scarcely more than a hundred miles from Florence. Travel was not difficult, and interchange of ideas, easy. And yet, Umbrian art differs in a large way from the Florentine.

## UMBRIAN PAINTING

It was characterized by a more abiding faith, a more spiritual beauty that has a tendency toward the sentimental, and a longer adherence to older methods of painting, than was found at Florence. It has always been true that the people of the hills have been slow to change their opinions, and accept new ideas. No doubt, part of this is due to the fact that travel is not so easy as it is in the plain, contact with new thought more difficult; but a part is due to the subtle influence that comes from the sturdiness and majesty of the mountain forms, as they react upon the impressionable human spirit. However, we must not forget that there are conspicuous examples of eagerly curious artists among the Umbrians.

The first important Umbrian master was Gentile da Fabriano. He was a migrant, but he never lost his Umbrian feeling. He worked in Venice in the Doge's Palace, but time has left none of his work there. He impressed himself strongly upon Jacopo Bellini, and through him, had some influence upon his two famous sons. Gentile went to Florence, and while sojourning there, painted an Adoration of the Magi. Since he was between fifty and sixty when he did this, we may assume that it represents his best style. At all events, it is a fine example of the best Umbrian of the early Quattrocento.

A brilliant cavalcade winds its way about the hills and up to the height on which stands a city, either Bethlehem or Jerusalem. By the side of the road, in the foreground, are the three kings with their numerous retinue. They are of the best traditions, as regards age, dress, and the richness of their effects.



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

The older painters had used much gilt, and raised ornament above the common plane. Gentile is so old-fashioned that he uses these devices, tho he is in the presence of Masaccio. The Madonna and attendant women have something of the sweetness and gentleness that were afterward used so effec-



GENTILE DA FABRIANO: ADORATION OF THE MAGI

tively by Perugino. An unusual humanizing element for so early a time, particularly for Gentile, is the touch of the babe on the bald head of the old kneeling king.

Of course it would be superfluous to find fault with the lifelessness of the dog and horses, the lack of atmosphere, and failures in foreshortening. One is impressed with the sense of unreality in the pic-

## UMBRIAN PAINTING

ture, while he is charmed with the rich color, gorgeous ornament, the pure, gentle faces, and the simple faith of the artist. Gentile was essentially a painter of the old school.

The first innovator among the Umbrians was Domenico Veneziano. Tho Venetian born, as his name indicates, he was an itinerant, and obtained all that was worth-while in his art, from his stay in Florence. He worked at Perugia, but left no great masterpiece. His real contribution to art was the inspiration he gave to his student, Piero della Francesca.

Piero was born with the temper of an experimenter; he developed a power to organize his results into scientific knowledge. He was a writer on mathematics, and the mathematical side of perspective interested him. He had some knowledge of the bases of harmony in color, and he experimented with oil as a medium. The human figure interested him, not for its beauty, but as a problem of geometric form, and the true projection of it upon a flat surface.

While the body of his work is considerable, one example is sufficient to illustrate his scientific realism, the portrait of Federigo Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino. The background is a landscape, in which it is easy to see the artist's interest in perspective, betrayed by winding roads and softened distance. Federigo is presented to us in profile view, an honest transcript from nature. He is the man that walked the streets of Urbino, the sympathetic comrade of his friends and the brutal enemy of his opponents. Piero used sharp eyes, and transformed his obser-

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vations into color and form with a sure hand and advanced technique.

The studies of della Francesca were well known in Umbria when Melozzo da Forli came to manhood. It may well be that Piero was his teacher. Whatever the truth, Melozzo was not carried away by interesting experiments and new methods. It is a great honor to him, that he made the technical excellence of della Francesca serve his native Umbrian spirit, and intensify the spiritual beauty of a Gentile da Fabriano.

The best work of Forli was done at Rome. While he was not invited to paint in the Sistine Chapel, he was given equally important commissions by Pope Sixtus. One was the decoration of the Vatican Library. In one of the frescoes, Sixtus receives the homage of Platina, to whom work on the library had been committed. The scene takes place in one of the corridors of the library itself. The columns are painted with great fidelity and show a command over perspective, worthy of della Francesca himself. Two cardinals attend the pope, one of whom was Riario, the friend and patron of Melozzo, and the other, he who afterward became Julius II.

Probably the decoration of the dome of the old church of Santi Apostoli does Melozzo greater credit than the fresco just noticed. When the church was rebuilt, a part of the decoration was cut from the wall, and is preserved in the sacristy of St. Peter's. The theme was the Ascension. The figures had to be fitted to the shape of the dome, to a curve,—a difficult problem in foreshortening. If this is re-



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MELOZZO DA FORLÌ: ANGEL

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membered, it will explain the seeming distortion of one of the angels illustrated. We are looking at the figure from its level, whereas it was to be seen from below. These creatures are finely Umbrian in type and features, and are hardly surpassed by the better-informed work of a succeeding generation. In fact, there are few painters of the Quattrocento, who are equal to Melozzo da Forli in keeping a just balance between a keen desire for high technical excellence and a genuine love for the old types of spiritual beauty.

As the towns of Forli and Fabriano gave their names to two of the artists named in this chapter, so Perugia, the capital and the chief city of Umbria, gave her name to the chief artist of the province, Perugino. Pietro Vanucci was his baptismal name, but he is much better known by the name of the city with which he was chiefly connected.

He was not the first painter of note in Perugia. Benedetto Buonfigli preceded Perugino by a quarter of a century. He painted in the Palazzo Comunale, but his popularity waned with the coming to the Perugians of their master artist.

Perugino was born in 1446. Before he was nine years of age, he was apprenticed to an artist. In his later wanderings, he was no doubt associated with Piero della Francesca. In time, he went to Florence, where he studied in the bottega of Verrocchio, and had the opportunity to learn from the works of Botticelli, Ghirlandajo, and Leonardo da Vinci. By the time he was thirty-five, he was counted among the best; for in 1480, he was called by Sixtus IV to paint in the

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MELOZZO DA FORLÌ: ANGEL



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Sistine Chapel. He was highly honored by having assigned to him, not only a large part of a side wall, but the front wall over the altar. The popularity that now came to him gave rein to a trait in his character that was the chief cause of his eclipse in his later years. He maintained studios in various places and accepted commissions that were turned over to students. He repeated designs whenever he found them popular. Soon after 1500, he ceased to be a creator, completely commercialized his art, and had no part in the Golden Age, tho he did not die until 1524.

His fresco work in the Sistine and at Perugia has been maintained to be Perugino's best. In these, he is neither as happy in his compositions, nor in his color, as he is in his altarpieces in oil. In the Sistine, the work on the front wall was destroyed when Michelangelo painted his Last Judgment there; but the work on the side walls still remains. Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter has been called "monumental", but it is extremely vacuous. The foreground is occupied by the group of disciples. Scarcely related to this group is the background, the main feature of which we may in courtesy say is the temple at Jerusalem. Neither in dignity, nor in architectural style is it worthy of its original.

A few years later than the work in the Sistine, in 1495, Perugino painted a Pietà for the nuns of Santa Chiara. This is one of his great successes, and was so considered by his contemporaries; for the nuns were offered three times the price they paid, if they would accept a copy from Perugino himself. It is

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painted in oil, with tones of high intensity in some parts, and melting grays in others. The brilliancy of his color was one of Perugino's real achievements, in which he was surpassed by no one of his generation.

The landscape is thoroly Umbrian in its suggestion, tho one is unable to say that the artist had a particular scene in mind. In the distance, he has given us the golden glow of the sunset, as he so often liked to do. This soft, but highly illuminated distance adds immensely to the psychological interest and spiritual appeal. Place the hand over this part of the picture, and consider how much has been lost of the spirit that permeates and animates the group in the foreground. To one who demands that landscape have the interest in light and air which inspired a Corot, or the interest in nature as an organism that made Rousseau endure contumely proudly, the landscape of Perugino is insipid; it is not naturalistic. But the landscape of Perugino has as much reason for existence as has the transcript of nature; it ministers to human mood and human need. For what else does nature exist in art?

The group about the dead body of Jesus is very carefully composed. In each of the minor groups, there is a suggestion of a triangle, a form which afterward became so important a part of the compositions of Bartolommeo and Raphael. Figures are thoughtfully placed under a refined sense of balance. The whole is put together with such correct articulation that one concludes the composition was not the result of a moment of inspiration, but was the result

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of most discriminating study for effects. Few of Perugino's compositions can equal this in coherence.



PERUGINO: PIETÀ

There is also more individuality in the different members of the groups than is usual for Perugino. His individuals are so placid in face and so controlled in action that they easily revert to a type, and



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lose the feeling of reality. Mary, in the Pietà, is slightly different from his usual type for the Madonna, and is a fine example of beauty under the burden of grief. Joseph of Arimathea, tho traditional in pose, is highly life-like in his deep sympathy. It is small wonder that Perugino was fearful to attempt a repetition of this subject; he knew how difficult it would be for him to equal this work. With Bartolommeo's it stands as the best illustration of this theme in Italian painting.

In 1499, Perugino had the privilege of completing a commission he had accepted some years before, the decoration of the chapel of San Brizio at Orvieto, or decorating the audience hall of the guild of bankers in his home city of Perugia. He chose the latter, because, we may assume, no work of first importance had been done by him in Perugia, and the commission was a high honor.

The audience hall of the Sala del Cambio is a square room with a vaulted ceiling. It had remained without decoration for fifty years. The subjects which the guild wished to adorn their walls were The Nativity, The Transfiguration, Prophets, and Sibyls, and certain of the virtues. The religious themes involved repetitions of previous works, or were themselves repeated in following works. In them, there is no new light upon Perugino but the same brilliancy of color, excellent use of landscape, the same grace of figure with the same sense of unreality. On the wall where he paints the virtues, the case is different.

The virtues had been painted in symbolic figures

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so many times, they had become so nearly traditional and conventional that there was a real opportunity, even a necessity, to vitalize them once more. Instead of discovering some new thought or embodying the old in a fresh way, Perugino has followed the simplest of plans and adopted the most obvious of motives,—a plan and motive that were as old as the Spanish Chapel of Santa Maria Novella. The wall has been divided into two parts and two virtues assigned to each part. In our illustration, the two virtues of Fortitude and Temperance are seated upon clouds in the lunette. We know them by their traditional attributes; without them we might guess that Fortitude is Temperance, or we might be at a loss to know their significance.

Below these figures, in a landscape that is the most distinguished feature of the decoration, he has arranged historical characters that were thought to be conspicuous instances of the virtues above them. Lucius Sicinius, Leonidas, and Horatius Cocles have been chosen to embody fortitude, while temperance is illustrated by the figures of Scipio, Pericles, and Cincinnatus. These figures ought to be treated decoratively; they are on the wall as decoration. They should therefore be connected with each other and the figures above in a pattern of architectural lines. There is none.

The characterizing power of the figures is no more successful than their decorative. The second figure from the left is supposed to be Leonidas. What masculinity, what heroism, what fortitude are aroused by the name! But here is a fairly good-looking

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fellow with a lackadaisical air, who is decked out with a head-dress that might be appropriate for a masquerade ball. He would have been unceremoniously ejected from Sparta, even if he had volunteered to fight for it. At the extreme right is Cincinnatus, the rustic, who left his plow to lead his rough, primeval



PERUGINO: VIRTUES, SALA DEL CAMBIO, PERUGIA

countrymen to victory, and then returned to the plow and country life. One wonders if Perugino knew anything at all about the old hero, or cared to know. The so-called warriors are not fighters; the followers of temperance do not show any of the marks of self-control. Their heads are tilted in the artist's usual fashion; their faces are calm and kind; they have much of the same characteristics that



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Perugino painted in the placid faces of his angels and madonnas.

Much praise has been lavished on the Sala del Cambio. It certainly is not the most uninspired work that Perugino ever did, but it is fatally weak in just



PERUGINO: DESIGN, SALA DEL CAMBIO, PERUGIA

the points where it should have strength, in decorative quality and in symbolism or characterization. One may praise the charm of the draperies, the correctness of figure drawing, the beauty of the landscape, and the flowing pattern which really decorates the ceiling, but beauty of parts should not make us condone its weakness of ensemble.

Perugino finished the Sala del Cambio in 1500.

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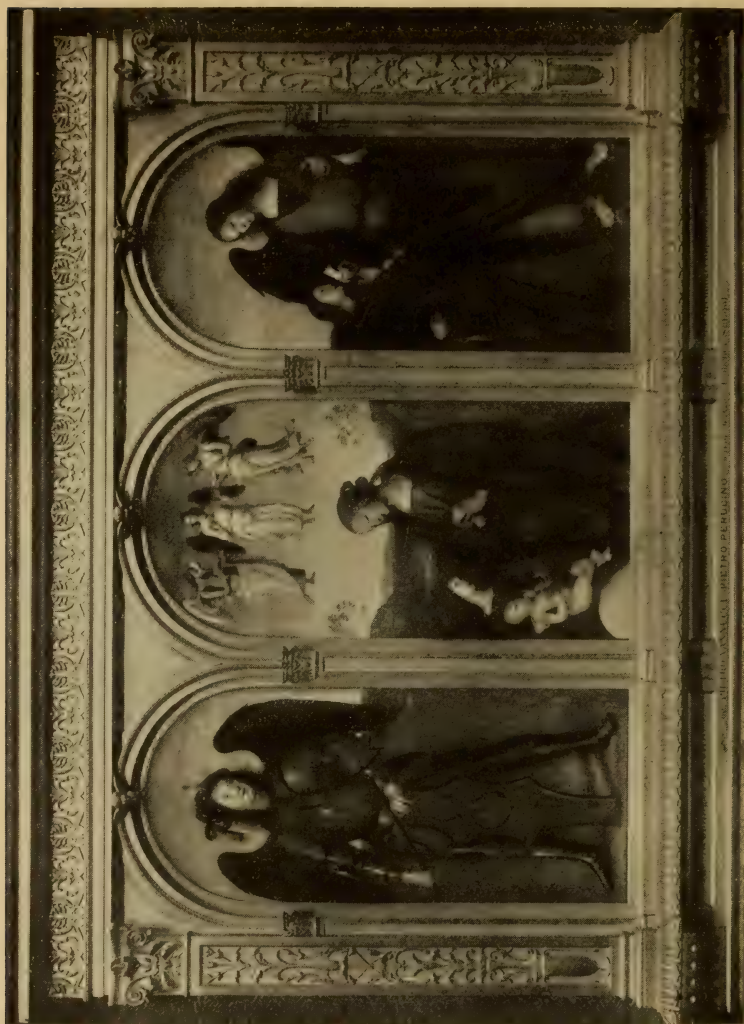
Either a short time before this, or slightly later, he painted an altarpiece for the Certosa at Pavia. At this time, he was at the height of his popularity, a popularity that had not been equaled by any one since the time of Giotto. He was also at the zenith of his power.

The picture is old-fashioned in form; it is a sort of double triptych, three panels above and three below. It has suffered the fate of similar pieces,—dismemberment. One of the panels is still in Pavia, two in Paris, and the three lower in London.

These London panels are as lovely in color as anything the artist ever dreamed. The landscape has that kindly air and mellow light, the placid water and hazy mountains, that Tennyson so happily described in his "Lotus Eaters". Even tho it is enclosed in three frames, it is felt as one; the horizon line extends quite across in a lovely curve that belongs to a country of gentle hills and spreading valleys. It is sunset. The glow in the sky, the hazy mountains, the winding river, the delicate foliage, all contribute to the feeling of peace in the outside world. How this altarpiece would calm the sin-burdened worshipper, and stir a vision of things celestial! Raphael at his best never surpassed his master's landscape.

Against this halo of vapory light, Perugino has set the enraptured face of the madonna, as she kneels in adoration to her infant son. He is far removed from the formalism of a Fra Angelico. Were it not for the uplifted eyes, which no doubt is a device to deepen spiritual feeling, there is no pietistic traditionalism in him. He is a normal baby. The mother

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PERUGINO: CERTOSA ALTARPIECE, LONDON :



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is the climax of Perugino's type—a large, open forehead, long drooping upper eyelids, a short upper lip, small mouth, and tapering chin, all framed by the softest and silkiest of hair. What she has been reading, what glory has filled her vision, we may not know; but we are sure that Perugino never penetrated farther into the “holy of holies” than he did when he caught a vision of this scene.

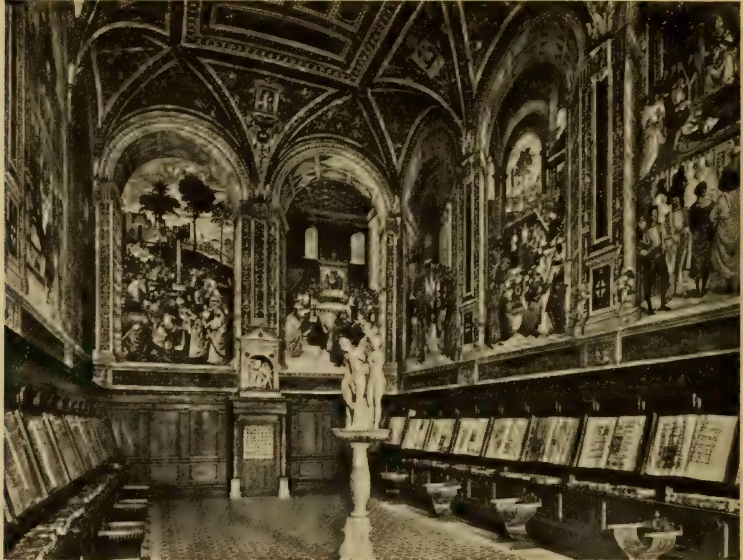
In the panel at the left is the Archangel Michael, like unto the figure of Lucius Sicinius, but far more fit than was the figure in the Cambio. Here it fills its panel and rhymes with the sides of the frame. Harmonies have been established.

The panel at the right is somewhat crowded with the two figures of Tobias and the Archangel Raphael. Out of it, however, a very interesting line study has been developed. Tobias is another instance of a marked lack of fitness in characterization; his court-like manner and dress rouse no associations with the Tobias we know in legend. The archangel is a shining example of the figure that Perugino loved. The gentle face and flowing lines of drapery were painted with a most sympathetic brush and make a direct appeal to our feeling for the refined and beautiful. It is said that Perugino's wife, of whom he was so proud that he spent hours on her problems of dress, was the model for this figure.

With Perugino and the Certosa altarpiece, the provincial traditions of Umbria reached their highest. Raphael inherited them and carried them over into the cosmopolitan art that has made his name famous. It was most fortunate that Perugino, at

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the height of his powers, was the teacher of this most assimilative artist, and it is one of the strange antics of fate that the teacher, declining in popularity, should have lived all through the brilliant success of his pupil, even surviving him by four years.



PINTURICCHIO: PICCOLOMINI LIBRARY, SIENA

Pinturicchio was a co-worker with Perugino, but not his equal in genius, nor technique. He remained a painter in tempera, tho he must have been impressed with the brilliancy of colors in oil. His popularity was partially due to his promptness in finishing his commissions at a time when the chief artists were notorious for their delays. His best work is his decoration of the Piccolomini library, attached to the

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cathedral at Siena, and intended as a receptacle for the precious manuscripts collected by Pope Pius II when he was a cardinal. It was natural, therefore, that the themes chosen for the decorations should be scenes from the life of the pope when he was known as Aeneas Silvius. The frescoes are well-preserved; the color is rich; the perspective is well studied both in line, and light and air.

While Pinturicchio and Perugino were bringing the provincial traditions of Umbria to full development, there was working with them in the Sistine Chapel, at Florence, and in the cities of Umbria, an artist who was carrying on the best traditions of della Francesca. Luca Signorelli was enthusiastic in his pursuit of the truth of nature, and the science of representation. He laid to the honor of Umbrian art one of the greatest developments in technique that is found in the whole course of the Quattrocento. Luca gathered up all the magnificent attainments of the preceding generations and focused them upon a study of the human figure. Under Piero, he studied anatomy, dissected much, and knew the human body thoroly in its muscular and bony structure. He knew more of the body as a machine, as a decorative unit, and as an interpreter of emotions than any other artist that had yet handled a brush. The sculptor Donatello was the only one who could be compared with him. Because he was a seeker after truth, unrelieved, unadorned, he was never popular. He had little charm of color; no soft gradations of light and shade; no concessions to human mood in a study of landscape; as deep an



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interest in an ugly body as a beautiful one. But his studies made possible that further advance in sculpture represented in the magnificent work of Michelangelo.

Signorelli was born in 1441 and died in 1523, almost an exact contemporary of Perugino. He has been called a Florentine artist, but he was born in Umbria, and got his inspiration from Piero della Francesca, and rightly belongs in the category of Umbrian artists. Like Perugino, he painted in the Sistine, and showed there that he knew how to manage large spaces. His greatest work, however, was done several years later.

The chapel of San Brizio in the cathedral at Orvieto remained unfinished in 1499 after more than a half century since the first painting had been done by Fra Angelico. Perugino had been asked to carry on the work, had accepted, but treated the cathedral authorities shamefully, as he did many another patron. He delayed, avoided the place, accepted other commissions, and finally failed the authorities altogether. Pinturicchio was appointed, but was unsatisfactory. Despairing of getting a painter more to their liking, the authorities invited Signorelli to carry out the work.

He took for his theme scenes connected with the end of the world,—The Teaching of the Antichrist, The Resurrection, The Ascension of the Blessed, The Descent of the Condemned, Paradise, and Punishment. No doubt the selection of the theme was determined in the artist's mind by his previous studies and interests, for in these scenes the nude figure has

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easy justification and profound significance. The wall spaces were large, and afforded him the opportunity of a lifetime.

Let us take one of these for illustration, one in which the theme seemed best suited to the peculiar genius of the painter,—The Driving Away of the



SIGNORELLI: THE CONDEMNED; CATHEDRAL, ORVIETO

Condemned into Punishment. In the lunette at the top, Signorelli has placed the three archangels, full-armed, watchful that the commands of the Almighty shall be carried into effect. From the sky two figures are hurtling down; their lack of control of movement is perfect. There had been no such falling figures up to this time, and there were few even after Signorelli

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had shown the way. Two devils plunge after them, fearing the archangel, yet determined that their victims shall drop to the uttermost depths. Another



SIGNORELLI: THE CONDEMNED, DETAIL

devil cuts the air, carrying a wild-eyed woman upon his back. Below is a mad medley of humans and devils, that nevertheless has been most carefully distributed by the artist's eye and hand. Some of the unfortunates have been over-run in the wild drive;



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others have fallen in collapse on the backs of their neighbors; some feel the snap of eternal shackles; some gasp for life, as fiendish fingers clutch their throats; all are terrified, helpless, hopeless.

The knotted muscles of arms, and legs, and backs; the varied attitudes of the body in striking, lifting, carrying, kneeling, bending, and falling limp in terror, are here portrayed as no one had done before Signorelli's time. If we focus our attention on the development of technical equipment of the artist, this work of Signorelli's ranks with the most significant in the Quattrocento. Michelangelo saw these wonderful frescoes, and we know that he appreciated them, for imitation is the sincerest form of appreciation. On the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, one finds much that reminds him of the impetuous fury of the chapel of San Brizio.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE QUATTROCENTO IN NORTHERN ITALY

THE great plain that lies east of the Apennines and drains its waters into the Adriatic thru the Po and its tributaries has always been very fertile and therefore prosperous. In the period we are studying, there were several important centers, but Padua and Venice stand out as the most prominent. From them radiated the influences that made the art life of the others possible.

Padua has a long and honorable history. In the great days of the old Roman Empire, it was the second city of Italy. After the rage of the Huns and Goths, there was little left of Roman glory, but the community spirit survived. She was among the first to establish a university in Western Europe, 1222, and Shakespeare puts the knowledge of its faculty at the service of Portia in her defense of Antonio against Shylock. When Venice pushed her land possessions to the west, Padua, only twenty-five miles away, lost her independence, but not her civic initiative. The Quattrocento was her great art period.

Giotto had come to the Arena Chapel in 1306; Dante had lived in the city at the same time; but no school of art had arisen. More than a hundred years

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elapsed before a real art movement was started by a humble art teacher and dealer in antiques. Squarcione had traveled in Greece, brought back fragments of the old art, and used these as a means of gain and as models for the pupils who resorted to his bottega. Under his direction, commissions were executed wherein the poses and forms were taken from the antique. His deep interest in the classical forms was a new inspiration to art. So far as is known, he left behind him no great work. He lives in the influence that he exerted upon his associates.

From his shop artists went out to the various ducal courts and prosperous cities of this region, carrying with them the classical ideals and the potentialities of a rejuvenated art. Cosimo Tura went to Ferrara, and left some respectable work behind him. Lorenzo Costa, his pupil, went on to Bologna, and there found a kindred spirit in Francia. Vincenzo Foppa, another of Squarcione's pupils, settled in Milan. There he trained Borgognone, who, with his lovely color, far surpassed the statuesque style of his master.

While Squarcione was at the height of his influence, the great exponent of classicism and realism at Florence was invited to Padua. Donatello's uncompromising ideals and his monumental work must have tremendously re-enforced and illuminated the dicta of Squarcione, and had much to do with the widespread influence of Paduan art. Paolo Uccello and Lippo Lippi from Florence and the Bellini from Venice added to the prestige of Padua as an art center.



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The greatest of all Squarcione's contributions to art was his discovery and training of Mantegna, his adopted son. This artist was most happy in his environment. Continual contact with the classical spirit vigorously developed his sense of form, while Jacopo Bellini and his sons softened the sculptur-esque effect of his figures through their Venetian sense of color. He found the Bellini so congenial that, in 1453, he married the daughter of Jacopo.

Mantegna's best early work was done for his home city, in the Eremitani Chapel, hard-by the Arena and the work of Giotto. From the series of the Life of St. James, one of the best is the Condemnation. One is struck immediately by the obvious interest of the painter in the classical. At the top of the composition are the familiar garlands and putti; below, a Roman triumphal arch and Roman soldiers whose armor has been carefully studied. Not to neglect any opportunity, he has overwhelmed a youngster in the foreground with a helmet and shield, a humorous touch in a serious scene.

Good characterization, too! One might think Mantegna would forget all about this in his interest in the antique. No, look at that Roman guard on the right. The master has expended his best enthusiasm for the antique on him, while he has been just as careful in characterization. What physical poise and reserve strength! What attention to duty and exaltation of position! It would be difficult to surprise this fellow, and just as difficult to elude his powerful muscles. St. James is the typical martyr. His convictions are strong; they have brought him

## QUATTROCENTO IN VENICE

many a struggle; he is weary, and resigned to his fate.

About 1459, Mantegna accepted the invitation, or rather the urgent persuasion, of the Duke of Mantua to take up his residence at court. For this prince he painted portraits, decorated rooms, made stage settings, and gathered a collection of art treasures. He did not return to Padua, and no one took his place there. After many successful years at Mantua, and insistent calls to go elsewhere, he died there in 1506, at the age of seventy-five.

His work at Mantua called for a considerable amount of the spirit of the decorator, and this fitted in with his previous interest in the classical. One of his triumphs was the decoration of the apartments of Isabella d'Este at the time of her marriage to the young marquis Gianfrancesco. Another was a series of nine pictures, *The Triumph of Caesar*, designed as a stage setting. Every detail of the magnificence of a Roman triumph has been studied and painted with enthusiasm.

Among his works at Mantua is the *St. George*, now in the Academy at Venice. Tho the Roman garland has been changed into pears, peaches, and pomegranates, the sculpturesque quality is dominant in the composition. The sharply incised road that winds up the hill, the clear-cut lines of the figure, the metallic quality of the armor, even the silvery greens and blues, make us think of a sculptor who has taken up painting. While the characterization of *St. George* is not subtle, the decorative quality of the picture is high.

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The picture that best sums up the mature style of Mantegna probably is the Madonna of Victory, painted in 1496. It was intended as a votive offering

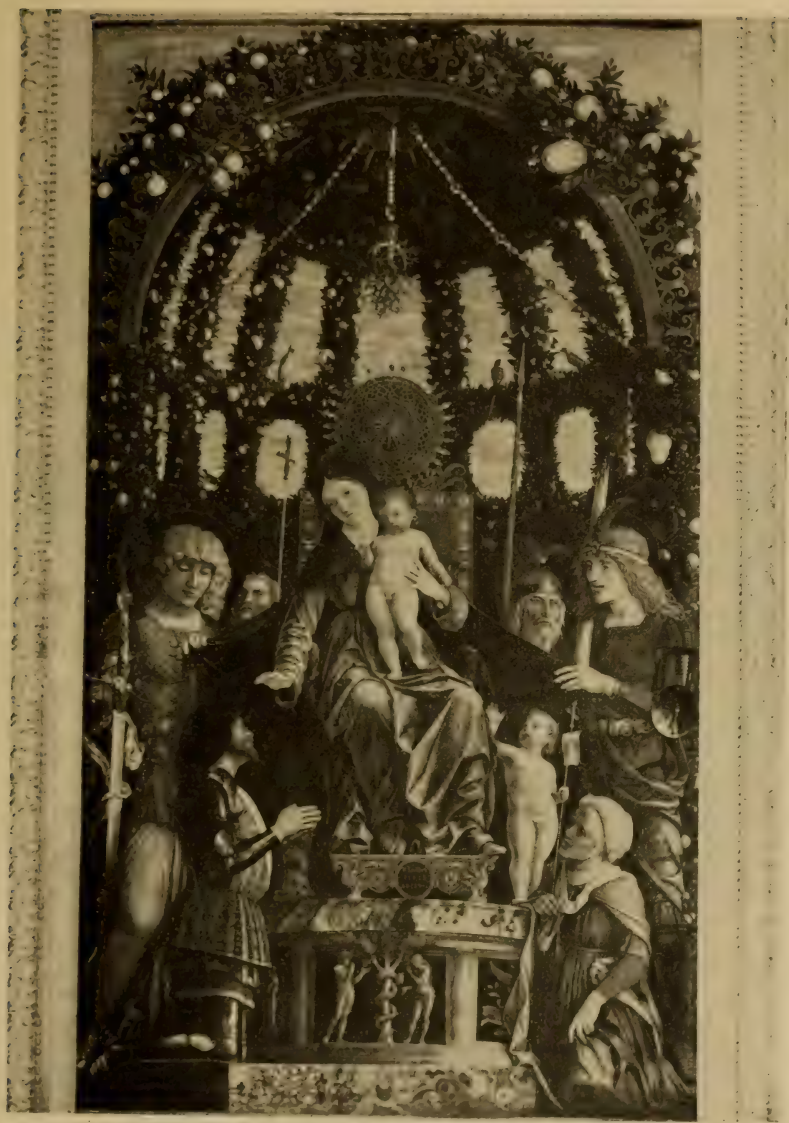


MANTEGNA: ST. GEORGE

for the questionable victory of the duke over the French army of Charles VIII in 1495. The Madonna is seated on a pedestal that is noteworthy for its beautifully veined marble and the classical suggestions. Instead of the common architectural



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MANTEGNA: MADONNA OF VICTORY

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motive for the background, one sees the form of the church apse, festooned in green and varied fruits, with panels opened to show the glow of the sky beyond. Was it some old Roman mosaic that inspired Mantegna with this idea? On the foreground at the left, the marquis kneels in adoration; on the other, Elizabeth, the patron saint of the marchioness, balances the composition, and shows her satisfaction with the act of the Marquis. St. George and the archangel Michael spread the Madonna's robe as if for his protection.

The Madonna of Victory shows that Mantegna was dominated by the classical spirit thruout his life. The whole composition is sculpturesque and architectural. Outlines are sharp and hard, rather than flexible and graded. The metal of the picture has its own proper texture, but there is a tendency to make the textiles metallic also. In the upper part of the picture, where naturalism is more definitely attempted, there is a mixture of motives, so that the effect is one of eccentricity.

Notwithstanding the fact that one may easily discover limitations in the art of Mantegna, his influence in the north is comparable to that of Masaccio at Florence. He broke the trammels of the traditional, and brought the influence of an old and tested art that was strong in form, to bear upon the native art that seems primarily to have been interested in color. If he was severe in his drawing, he was never trivial. If his religious pictures were always austere; one is not nauseated with the pretty sentimentalities of some of his contem-

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poraries. While he submits himself too completely to classic forms and technique, he always manifests a vigorous originality that showed a way toward a synthesis of form and color which the next generation was quick to use.

The greatest center of art life in the north of Italy was Venice. She was considerably later than Florence in responding to the new impulses and the new forms of art. This is not strange when we remember that Venice was well established before the Renaissance came into being. Her prosperity and wealth had come from contact with the east where Byzantine traditions laid their heavy hands upon slowly changing cycles. She had built her St. Mark's from Byzantine models rather than Italian. The art she had brought home from the east was all Byzantine. In this conservative atmosphere, new ideas and a new art had a struggle to gain and maintain standing.

Again, Venice had no classical traditions that might be revived. None of her history had called for loyalty to Rome and Italy. She was a merchant state, driving her ships toward the east and sending loaded caravans toward the Rhine country. It was thru these commercial connections with the north where new forms of art appeared, that Venice got an inspiration for a new art. Workers from the north were attracted to the seat of the glass industry on the island of Murano, and came to dominate its painters. Greater, however, than this northern influence, was the pervasive power of that great dynamic across the Apennines, Florence. Florentine artists did not go



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to Venice; they stopped with Padua; but Jacopo Bellini went to Florence, and studied at Padua. Thru him and his sons came the regeneration of Venetian art.

It is quite beyond our purpose to deal with the vague and uncertain facts regarding the beginnings of the school of art at Murano. The stiff, angular figures and the archaic spirit which characterized the early German masters is found in the work at Murano, but there is a feeling for color that was absent in the North, even tho the painters of the North had the advantage of an earlier use of oil as a medium. The most important painters of Murano were a certain Alemannus (German), and the Vivarini. Their work need not detain us. It could not survive in competition with truer draughtsmen and subtler colorists. Their traditions and spirit matured and mellowed in the art of Carlo Crivelli.

This master painted in Venice in the Vivarini style until a grievous crime drove him into exile. He settled in the little towns of the Marches, a province far removed from the art influences of Venice and Florence. Building upon the traditions of the Vivarini school, he developed a personal style that is most charming for its very quaintness. He used tempera, and for that reason his pictures have retained a freshness that is often wanting in works done in oil. He preserves the raised surfaces, the bossing in gold, of the archaic. His colors were cream, faded rose, olive green, and much gold.

One of his most advanced, and at the same time most delightful pictures, is the Annunciation, now in

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the National Gallery of England. The commission was given by the city of Ascoli in commemoration of certain church privileges that had been granted to



CRIVELLI: ANNUNCIATION

the town and had been received at the time of the feast of the Annunciation. The inscription at the bottom, *Libertas Ecclesiastica* (church liberty), suggests the occasion. Emidius, the patron saint of Ascoli, accompanies the angel of the Annunciation,

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and holds a model of the city. The angel is a glory of color and drapery. The Holy Spirit is represented as bursting out of the sky and descending in the form of a dove upon Mary. Crivelli is careful that we shall see the line of light. This passes through the wall. It would hurl the brick if it were as violent here as in the sky; but Crivelli has naïvely framed an opening that no damage may be done to our sensibilities and the proprieties of the occasion. Delightful, isn't it? How interested and friendly those gossips are across the street on the landing! And the timid, curious child completes a human element of surpassing interest. The accessories of the picture are astonishing in their richness. The elegant architecture, the brilliant rugs and plumage of the birds, the softness and glow of light and air, make up a dream of the old Venetian home. It is all so naïve, so unsophisticated that it is easy to believe that Crivelli, in the life of the smaller towns, forgot the sins of the city and became a child again.

The school of Murano and the Vivarini was provincial and conservative and was displaced by the cosmopolitan and enthusiastic spirit of Jacopo Bellini and his followers, who drew their inspiration from Padua and Florence.

Jacopo Bellini was Venetian born. He was attracted by the work of Gentile da Fabriano when he was painting in Venice, and followed him to Florence at the conclusion of his stay. No doubt he learned much about art during this visit though we know little about how or from whom. We do know that



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he spent six months in prison on certain charges which may well have been animated by the fact that he was a foreigner. His chief influence on art was in his teachings, rather than in great productions. His sketch book seems to have been reckoned as a very precious thing by his sons, and some of the designs were appropriated as the basis for some of their pictures. From this sketch book, which is still extant, one can see that Jacopo was temperamentally opposed to the sculpturesque methods of his noted son-in-law, Mantegna, and loved graceful, flowing lines. His feeling for color, too, was stronger.

Jacopo lives in his two sons, Gentile and Giovanni, who blended his sensuous appeal of color and line with the intellectual beauty of Mantegna, and brought Venetian technique to a point where it was the adequate vehicle for the greatest masters.

Gentile the older, in addition to the influence of his father and Mantegna, was affected by his life in the East at the Turkish court. Perhaps this is manifested in his very great love for pomp and pageantry, tho a nature that found these interesting breathed a congenial atmosphere in Venice itself. Several of his pageant pictures, as the Miracle of the True Cross, and St. Mark Preaching in Alexandria, have come down to us, tho many of them were destroyed in the burning of the Doge's Palace. A very interesting one is the Procession in St. Mark's Square, showing how the square looked in 1496.

At the left, the old clock tower, monumental entrance to the Merceria, had not been built. The chimney pots are characteristic; one may find the

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same pattern on old buildings today. The flagpoles are there, but they have not the elegant bronze bases that Leopardi later gave them. St. Mark's has the same general features as today, but the



GENTILE BELLINI: PROCESSION IN ST. MARK'S SQUARE

mosaic over the door at the left is the only one that has survived to our time. The buildings at the right were all replaced a hundred years after this picture by more sumptuous that were set farther back, and left the Campanile standing practically alone.

While Gentile did not produce many portraits, he has left us one that is of considerable interest from the historical point of view, as well as the esthetic. It is that of Sultan Mahomet, the conqueror of Constantinople. Because of her eastern trade, Venice established friendly relations with the Turk, and was asked by the Sultan to loan him a painter. Gentile was sent and remained in Constantinople for a number of years. It is probable that the portrait was not painted from life, due to the fact that religious

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scruples would have prevented Mahomet from having his picture painted, but this would not have interfered with Gentile's taking some sketches and notes from which he might afterward develop a portrait.



GENTILE BELLINI: SULTAN MAHOMET

The painting is finished like enamel, and perhaps differs little in this respect from the meticulous work that was done by the school of the Vivarini. But the light value of the turban in contrast with the



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low values of background and accessories is very different in effect from the spirit of the Vivarini. The painted frame and brodered cloth, while deriving much from classical motives, are essentially Byzantine and Oriental in spirit. The fur coat is said to be a later addition. The face is a real study of character. Mahomet is revealed to us as a keen crafty intellect, with a considerable strain of sensuality, that has now brought the man at the height of his career, only a feeling of dissatisfaction and of weariness. It is a faithful representation of the Mahomet we know in history.

Giovanni Bellini was most fortunate in the period in which he lived and the length of his life. He was born when a new life was stirring and had not yet reached maturity, while his long life enabled him to pass from uncertain attempts to adequate realization. He was born in 1428 and died in 1516. In all his career, he constantly strengthened his technique and enriched his imagination and inspiration. His last work is his best work. To reach eighty, painting better than at forty, is given to the lot of few artists. His forms are truer; his color is richer and more mellow; his insight into the deeper things of human life saner and more complete. Added to these glories is the fact that he was the teacher and inspirer of the two greatest masters of Venice, Giorgione and Titian. Bellini sums up all the travail of the Quattrocento at Venice and is the first great example of its highest attainments. So great is his achievement that it would be easy to place him with the great masters of the next period.

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He was taught by his father and came under the influence of Mantegna and the Classical, tho his response to these was not direct and immediate. The reason seems to be that he was essentially poetic and religious in temper. His heart was in allegories and religious themes. Pageants he painted, it is true, but their quality cannot be determined as they perished in the fire that destroyed Gentile's. As court painter, it was his duty to paint the portraits of the doges thru four administrations. Only one of these has been preserved for us, but that is a great masterpiece. Still it remains true that his most sympathetic work is found in his religious pictures. The serene faces of old saints, the sweet and thoughtful faces of the Mother and the younger saints, and the quiet dignity of an altarpiece enlisted the finest efforts of Giovanni's mind and brush.

An early example of his religious pictures is the Dead Christ with Madonna and John. Here we may see some of the influence of Mantegna and his sculpturesque style. The stiff lines of the naked body and the angular forms of the drapery are suggestive of this and the old Byzantine models. The "corkscrew curls" of John are certainly "bronzy" enough. But, in spite of this archaic or classical limitation, we see very genuine feeling sympathetically expressed. Giovanni's technical equipment is weak, but his vision is strong.

Some years later, about 1487, he painted the Madonna of the Two Trees. His style is much more mature. There is lingering archaism in the child and in the rather stiff lines of the drapery, but there is a

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tremendous advance in the use of background and of shadows. The background is a pale green textile stretched in the big outdoors, with charming bits of



GIOVANNI BELLINI: MADONNA OF THE TWO TREES

landscape on either side. No, it is not the light of nature, and trees never grew in that form, but the whole is highly decorative and is a distinctly fresh and beautiful motive. The shadows are finely graded and end in strong contrast. Only in Gentile's work have



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they been used so intelligently. The color is very rich, oil on wood. The type of the Madonna is new and very distinctive. She is a well-groomed, digni-



GIOVANNI BELLINI: MADONNA OF THE FRARI

fied, even proud, Venetian. There is a strong element of the sensuous, that is far removed from the characteristic Florentine type.

At about the same time, 1488, Giovanni painted for the church of the Frari a much larger and far

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

more pretentious altarpiece, now generally spoken of as the Madonna of the Frari. While it preserves a considerable amount of the old conservatism—the triptych form and the architectural suggestion of apse, nave, and aisles—the frame is very distinctive and the little cherub musicians at the foot of the throne are an extremely attractive innovation. The color is far richer than in previous work. The dome of the apse is gold and the semi-circle a deep mellow red. The dress of the Madonna is of the same fluent red; her mantle, a pure blue, that is carried up over her head-dress of white. These primaries are carried thru the composition in varying hues and values with most satisfying result. The whole is laid on with very smooth brush work and the finish is like enamel.

The people in the composition seem to belong with that kind of technique; there is no note of insincerity. The old men stand in serene repose; St. Nicholas on the left and Benedict on the right. They have grown in years, they have grown in “grace and knowledge of the truth”. They fill very completely the medieval and early renaissance conception of saints. The Child is in sharp contrast with the naturalism of the children musicians. His legs in particular seem to lack modeling, and he is rather colorless in character. The musicians are very intent on their music and are lovely in form and character. The mother does not reveal anything new in Giovanni’s art, perhaps is scarcely as satisfying as the mother of the previous picture. But the total effect is in most harmonious accord with the purpose of the

## QUATTROCENTO IN VENICE

altarpiece. Before it, the troubled spirit must find comfort, peace, and strength to endure and strive.

It remained for Bellini to find a completer form; in 1505, to surpass the work of 1488; at seventy-seven,



GIOVANNI BELLINI: MADONNA OF THE FRARI, DETAIL

to surpass the work done at sixty. This he did in the Madonna of San Zaccaria. The picture is painted for a particular place in the church of San Zaccaria. The pilasters and arches of the picture are the repetition



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

of pilasters and arches of the church. One seems to look into a little cloister and catch glimpses of the deep blue sky thru the open arches. The painter has carried the illusion to the point of painting an iron rod that binds the walls together.

The group in this little alcove, or chapel, has much more of the element of unity than the one in the Frari. It preserves the best of the old style in the serenity of the characters and the formality of the composition, but the harmony of lines and oneness of thought and purpose show Bellini at his best. On one side is Peter, the founder of the church; on the other, Jerome, who did so much for the preservation of the gospel record. They are calm old men who have arrived thru storm and stress, and are here in their capacity of guardians of the faith and the gentle group between. St. Catherine bears her palm branch of martyrdom. Lucy, on the other side, is not surpassed in loveliness by any of Bellini's women. Her face has a perfect contour; her hair is golden silk; her figure is stately; and her spirit of the gentlest. The musician in green and gold is a happy addition to the composition both in space filling and in the suggestion of soft melody. The Child, for some reason, never seems to be in Bellini's best style. This one is more satisfying than the one of the Frari, but neither adds to our appreciation of the artist. The Mother has a very sweet face. She has lost much of the Venetian hauteur of the Madonna of the Two Trees, tho still retaining the dignity that befits a throne. Her loveliness is increased by the simple white head-dress that belongs with her simply-

*QUATTROCENTO IN VENICE*



GIOVANNI BELLINI: MADONNA OF SAN ZACCARIA

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dressed hair and the simple lines of the yoke of her dress. This is in strong contrast with the rich folds of the blue and green drapery that falls from her knees down upon the steps of the throne.

The picture as a whole is very inspiring, but in no sense dramatic. "Sweetness and light," tho in no way aggressive, or spectacular, are after all things that satisfy just as much as the storm and stress of life. Add to these qualities color that expands and enlarges and satisfies to the full, and one feels that here is a picture that will not pass away. Styles of painting and forms of religious thought may come and go, but this shall endure. It is one phase of the "likeliest God within the soul".

Tho Giovanni was state painter thru the reigns of four doges, we have but one portrait of any of them. It is that of Doge Loredano, who was ruler from 1501-1521, a period of great prosperity for Venice. In his time the jealousy of nations was aroused by the Venetian policy of land expansion to the west, and the powerful League of Cambrai was formed. Loredano was successful in defending his city, but the expansion stopped.

The doge is painted in his state robes with all their richness of color and texture. The tone is the mellow mixture of gold and ivory one sees in old parchment. The background is obtrusive neither in color nor in form. One wonders, if Durer saw this picture, why he was not impressed with the lesson of simplicity which he learned from his visit to the Netherlands. This surface delicacy in textile is matched by the most subtle fullness of detail in the



## QUATTROCENTO IN VENICE

painting of flesh. The skin has all the smoothness that comes with well-preserved age, with all the flexibility that is retained above a healthy flow of



GIOVANNI BELLINI: DOGE LOREDANO

blood. Underneath is a sturdy bony structure that gives one a vigorous impression of matured power. The characterization is thoroly individual, while at the same time befitting the pride and achievements of the Queen of the Adriatic. It combines in a re-

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

markable way the individual with the ideal, and therefore satisfies the concept of a great portrait. There are very few Italian portraits that are comparable with it.

Giovanni Bellini sums up all the best of the Quattrocento at Venice and is the teacher of new methods and inspirations. His greatest pupils are the glory of the Golden Age at Venice. They must be discussed in a later chapter. This is the place to mention a follower of the Bellini, who combines Gentile's love of the pageant with the sweetness of Giovanni. Carpaccio belongs to the old order that is slowly passing away. He is essentially a decorative painter, identified with the walls of the various scuole, or mutual aid societies, that did so much to ameliorate the conditions of the poor, living among the wealthy and grasping patrician families of Venice.

His most noteworthy series is one of nine canvases for the scuola whose patron saint was St. Ursula. The story of St. Ursula seems to have made a considerable impression on medieval thought. In Flemish art, Memling gave us one of the finest works of his period in painting scenes from her life upon the little Gothic shrine which contains some of her relics. In Cologne is the church of St. Ursula, where the bones of martyred followers are displayed as sacred relics. In outline, her story is as follows:

Ursula, a very devout Christian, was sought as bride by Conon, son of the pagan king of England. Altho she wished to devote her life completely to the church, she deferred to her father's wish, and

## QUATTROCENTO IN VENICE

consented to become a bride if she were granted 11,000 virgin attendants by the king of England, if she had three years in which to make a pilgrimage to Rome, and if Conon should become a Christian. Conon arrived at Rome at the same time as Ursula. There she told him of a vision that foretold her coming martyrdom. He abandoned the thought of marriage, and knelt with her to receive baptism at the hands of the pope, and took a new name to indicate his changed life. Bishops and the pope accompanied them on their return journey as far as Cologne, where they were attacked by the Huns and all fell in violent death. It is the old story of sacrifice of a lower good for what is conceived to be a higher.

The series is full of Venetian architecture and setting. Carpaccio has selected mainly the incidents that give the courtly side of the story, but the Dream of St. Ursula gives us the more simple human element of the story. In a room that is furnished with almost austere elegance, Ursula lies asleep, her head partially resting on the palm of one hand. Her slippers are neatly placed where they may be easily reached. Her little pet lies at the foot; her crown is placed on the bench at the foot. There is nothing in disorder, nothing over-elaborate. Here is forethought, sincerity, simplicity, peace, harmony. Upon this scene of peaceful slumber an angel comes. The presence is revealed, not by the rush of wings nor with the disturbance of even gentle music; only by the fullness of the light that shines, not from the angel, but from a concentrated source behind. It streams through the round window and strikes



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smartly on the beams above. From floor and beam, it is reflected and diffused until there are no deep shadows in the room. Is it the light of morning, or



CARPACCIO: DREAM OF ST. URSULA

a supernatural glory? The artist makes either answer possible. One is reminded that the same problem and the same solution was used by LeRolle in his *Visit of the Shepherds to the stable at Bethlehem*. In sharp contrast is the supernatural Adora-

## QUATTROCENTO IN VENICE

tion of the Shepherds by Correggio where the babe is made the definite source of the light.

From what we see of Carpaccio in other pictures of this series, as well as elsewhere, one feels sure that to him the most important problem of painting was the problem of light. One feels sure that in another period, he might have been an enthusiastic painter of landscape. As it is, the light of Venice shimmers on no one else's canvas more gloriously than on Carpaccio's. He was a painter of purity in all things, and of simple elegance that long appealed to the discriminating taste of Venice.

The Bellini traditions lived on for many years in the work of less gifted followers, like Mansueti, Cima da Conegliano, Catena, Previtali, Marconi; but with them an old order passed away, while with Bellini's more distinguished pupils, a new order was ushered in. (Chapter XIV.)

## CHAPTER IX

### ARCHITECTURE 1400-1550

IN Part II, beginning with Chapter IV, we have been studying the development of the Quattrocento in Sculpture and Painting. Since the end of the fourteen hundreds is marked in architecture by no great change in motives, such as was the case in the other more quickly responsive arts, it is deemed best to carry the narrative beyond the limits of the century, into the domain of Part III. This chapter then deals with all of the best period of Renaissance architecture.

The slight study of architecture in Chapter I was of the period usually considered as antedating the Renaissance. The style was a mixture of Romanesque and Gothic. The monuments were pretentious, but wanting in spontaneity, because the Italians were, in a large degree, using alien ideals. Gothic ideals and Gothic construction were never assimilated by them. All the vital currents of tradition flowed from ancient Rome. The ruins of old Rome invited attention from their very proximity, and the life of this time was so vigorous that it was interested in its origins and history. The northern spirit was very different; one who has compared an Amiens with a Roman temple knows how different. For the Italians to have adopted the Gothic would have



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meant a sharp reversal of traditions and ideals. This is something that races do not do of their own volition.

There was added to these favorable conditions for the rebirth of the Classical in architecture, the demands of a large number of new patrons for a new type of architecture. The merchant princes did not want churches and palaces; they wanted mansions for entertainment and for the satisfaction of family pride. And their purses were just as effective in architecture as they were in painting and sculpture. The communal demands did not cease, but the individual demands had to be regarded. Churches continued to be built, but the great era of church building was rapidly passing. Old churches were rebuilt in the new style; chapels were added to the old ones; façades were completed; but the consuming enthusiasm for the church as an institution, which built the great shrine churches of both north and south, was diverted into many channels of interest. The church was one institution among many. After 1400, the demands of palace architecture, as much as ecclesiastical, determined architectural style.

In the palace, the structural requirements are much simpler than in the church. The lintel form of construction is eminently fitted to a building which covers considerable area and must be divided into many rooms. The area depended upon the ambitions and purse of the owner, while the height was ordinarily two or three stories.

Since the new architecture was for an individual, not chiefly for the church and community, and since

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the structural idea controlled far less than the external composition, designers arose, and with them individual designs rather than types. The architect with his drawings became a necessity. Study of old classic styles was required that they might be adapted to the needs of the new patrons. Naturally the architects fall into groups according to their habitat, for a strong mind and a virile design affect the work of all that come into contact with them.

There were three great centers of architectural development in the period from 1400 to 1550,—Florence, Rome, and Venice,—but many others have one or more buildings and sometimes an architect worthy of mention. Each of them developed an individual style. Florentine palaces had an inner court, or cortile, with a columnar arcade of one or more stories. The exterior was characterized by rusticated masonry, symmetry in the number and position of pilasters, and ornamental detail on the face. The Venetian palaces ordinarily are lacking in rustication. Pilasters and columns are common. The windows are grouped toward the middle in each story. A balcony, or string cornice, separates the stories, and the main cornice is usually much lighter than at Florence. The ensemble of a Venetian front is more varied in light and shade, and not so heavy in mass. The Roman palace is differentiated from others of Italy chiefly by the stricter use of the Classic Orders, and by greater size and pretentiousness.

It is no surprise to find the first great designer of the Fourteen Hundreds at Florence. When we have

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breathed the atmosphere of Masaccio, Donatello, and Ghiberti, we are prepared to expect that this environment will give birth to a great architect. The same Brunelleschi that entered the competition for the bronze doors of the Baptistry, and mightily aided the painters of his generation by his formulation of the laws of perspective, is the first great innovator in architectural design. He made serious studies of some of the old Roman buildings, and sketches of many others, and no doubt formulated many architectural principles for his own use, but the pioneer can hardly be expected to write a treatise.

His first monumental work was the dome for the cathedral at Florence. Arnolfo del Cambio had planned for an octagonal dome, but the difficulties of construction were so great that more than a hundred years had gone by since the beginning of the cathedral without a workable plan for its completion. In 1420, the task of building the dome was given to Brunelleschi, now forty-three, apparently without much confidence in his ability; for Ghiberti, wholly unskilled in architecture, was assigned as his colleague. Ghiberti soon quit. After fourteen years of delay, annoyance, and hard work, the cupola was practically complete (the cornice of the drum is still incomplete); but Brunelleschi did not live to see the completion of the lantern.

The plan for the construction of the dome is perhaps the most daring of the Renaissance, if one remembers that it was built without precedents. No dome in the world's history had been so stupendous



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in its combination of height and span. The span is nearly 140 feet, almost as much as the Roman Pantheon whose height was no greater than its span. The level from which the dome springs is about 175 feet above the ground. From the cornice of the drum to



BRUNELLESCHI: THE CATHEDRAL DOME, FLORENCE

the eye of the dome is 133 feet, while the total height from the pavement to the top of the lantern is 352 feet.

Even more daring is the contempt Brunelleschi shows for the prudent way in which domes had heretofore been built. A great encircling drum had always been built around the base of the dome to take care of the thrust, the outward push that al-

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ways is found in arch construction. This man literally lifted his dome out of its retaining wall and set it on top of the drum. He trusted to his use of sections in the construction of the dome, and to invisible chains that encircle the base, to keep the structure intact. While these points raise the question of the structural integrity of the dome, they made it remarkable to its contemporaries, and no less interesting to our modern engineers.

Even tho one may not justify the bold structural innovations, it is impossible to withhold admiration for the external effect. This, after all, was the chief purpose in erecting the dome. One wonders whether any of the many built since that time, all confessedly inspired by it, surpass it either in daring, mass effect, or correctness of proportions. Michelangelo is reported to have said that he could build a larger for St. Peter's but not more beautiful.

And yet, this dome, the monumental work of Brunelleschi, so full of the spirit of individualism, so prophetic of the great days that followed, did not furnish any direct architectural help to its generation, did not point out the building forms that were to characterize the century. These are found rather in the less pretentious commissions which Brunelleschi executed,—The Pazzi Chapel, San Spirito, San Lorenzo, the Pitti Palace, and the Foundling Hospital.

The Pitti Palace is noteworthy for the rusticated walls and heavy main cornice. Started by Luca Pitti, it later became the property of the Medici princes, and is now the royal residence in Florence, known everywhere for the gallery of painting.

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The Foundling Hospital boasts a very fine loggia from the designs of Brunelleschi, while the spandrels of the arches are filled with the famous "bambini" of Andrea della Robbia.

San Spirito is distinctive for its interior. It is in the form of a Latin cross, with the side aisles carried around the transepts and the choir. Each column carries a section of entablature, from which the arch springs. A small dome crowns the crossing of nave and transepts.

In San Lorenzo, the entablature block that carries the arches is heavier than in San Spirito. One wonders whether Brunelleschi's sense of beauty was not here sacrificed to his interest in classical forms.

[The most refined of his creations is the Pazzi Chapel in the cloister of Santa Croce.] It is a rectangle in plan with a porch at the front. The interior, central portion, is covered with a dome, or an adaptation of Gothic vaulting that has the effect of a dome. The walls are decorated with Corinthian pilasters that have no structural value. The porch, part of the cloister arcade of Santa Croce, is a barrel vault, supported by six columns of the Corinthian order. Above them on the exterior is a paneled attic wall. This attic wall is fine in the proportions of the panels, an effect gained by the innovation of pairing the pilasters. One observes thruout a considerable originality of design, and many of the forms that characterized later Renaissance architecture.

Vasari reports that "after Brunelleschi, Michelozzi was the one who, with the best judgment, planned either palaces, monasteries, or houses", and



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that the Riccardi palace by him "was the first palace built in the modern manner". It was designed for Cosimo de' Medici in the year 1430. This, one recalls,



BRUNELLESCHI: THE PAZZI CHAPEL, FLORENCE

was before his exile, which no doubt taught him some lessons about a palace and popular favor.

It is the first of the great private houses that display the wealth and power of the individual, as the great churches and civic buildings had displayed the

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proud communal spirit of an earlier time. It is three stories in height, with no roof line visible. The lower story is heavily rusticated; the second, smooth



MICHELOZZI: THE RICCARDI PALACE

ashlar, with heavy joints; the third, entirely plain. This graded effect of light and shade, along with the graduated height of the stories, is responsible for much of the charm of the façade. The classical is not dominant; there are no engaged orders on the

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front, tho there is much classic detail in the windows and crown cornice. The interior court has a vaulted arcade like the cloisters of monasteries. The rooms are well-proportioned and stately.

At this point, it is well to recall the discussion of the New Thought in Chapter VI, and the effect upon sculpture and painting. The same ideals, we see, are driving on in architecture. The enthusiasm of Brunelleschi and Michelozzi for the classical will spread and deepen. Careful study of the ancient forms will result in dicta and formulæ, and architectural treatises will appear. More and more individual initiative will submit itself to law, and interest will expend itself finally in copying the antique.]

The first of the architects to put the results of his study into writing was Alberti, 1404-1482. He left behind him a monumental work in ten volumes called "*De Re Ædificatoria*". His liking for all things Roman is indicated by the fact that he wrote this book in Latin tho Italian was "current coin" and had been since the time of Dante.

His great palace is the Rucellai, 1455. It is the first Renaissance building with superimposed pilasters on the front. Of course these have no structural value, are pure ornament, but one can hardly deny the beauty of the bays thus formed. This distinctive façade required a weakening of cornice effect. In the Riccardi, the crown cornice was eight feet in height, or one-tenth of the total height of the building; in the Rucellai, it is but one-sixteenth of the total height.

Other important works of Alberti are the churches



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of Santa Maria Novella (façade), San Francesco at Rimini, and S. Andrea at Mantua.

The highest art is always a happy combination of diversities; that is what we mean by harmony.



ALBERTI: THE RUCELLAI PALACE

[Here at Florence were the traditions of the fortress and rusticated masonry. Struggling with these for mastery were the revived classical traditions, less massive and more refined in proportions. The happy

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combination of these diverse tendencies would be a typical Florentine building of this period. To many, the Strozzi Palace is such a building.] It was begun by Benedetto da Majano, whom we know for his wonderful pulpit in S. Croce, and completed by Cronaca in 1553.

Rome was late in taking a position of importance in architecture. The deterring influences that had affected sculpture and painting affected building. The popes were struggling to lift Rome to the point where her wealth and power would command the services of the great Italian artists. Both Nicholas V and Sixtus IV left buildings to their credit, but the real building era did not come until the turn of the century in the reign of Julius II. This era followed immediately upon the Florentine, for Rome drew upon Florence and north Italy for her trained architects. Its duration was something like a half century, 1500-1550. Building did not stop by the middle of the century, but it ceased to be distinctive. The new ideas had found their adequate embodiment.

Bramante, the first of the great architects at Rome, was a north Italian. He was educated as a painter under Mantegna but found his real interest in architecture. He may have been a pupil of Alberti's; must have come under his influence at Mantua; but follows the Roman traditions more closely.

He began his architectural career in Milan, where he built the choir and transepts of S. M. delle Grazie. Before 1500, he came to Rome, where his classical tendencies found a congenial atmosphere.

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In the Cancelleria Palace, he followed the precedent set by Alberti in the Rucellai, a surface decoration of pilasters. But he omits them altogether from the first story, and uses them in pairs on the second



BRAMANTE: THE TEMPIETTO IN S. PIETRO IN MONTORIO, ROME

and third. He uses the same motive in the Palazzo Giraud.

↳ A little building in the cloisters of San Pietro in Montorio is a fine example of his strict adherence to



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classic models. ] It closely follows a Roman temple of Vesta.

Bramante's greatest design was St. Peter's at Rome, but, as the structure was a composite, em-



SANGALLO: THE FARNESE PALACE, ROME

bodily the ideas of different men, and summing up much of the Roman Renaissance, the discussion is placed later.

Bramante had two eminent students and collaborators, Sangallo and Peruzzi. Antonio Sangallo's distinctive work was the Farnese Palace, 1534-1545. It is three stories in height, with the stories accented by string cornices. One notes the absence of decorative pilasters. The only perpendicular connection

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between the stories is the rusticated quoins, or corner trim. Horizontality dominated as it has in no other building except the Pitti Palace.

This effect is intensified by the placement of the windows. There are thirteen in each, counting the door space of the first as one. They are set low, leaving an undecorated band quite across the front in the third story, and only slightly interrupted in the first and second. In the second and third stories, pedestals, or brackets, rise from the horizontal cornice, and support the classic orders of the windows. The series of pedestals, the window orders, and the pediments above them, each produces a band effect across the front. Then the main cornice, strong but well proportioned, more than two hundred feet without a break, forms the fitting climax to a composition both massive and refined. Of course it is not perfect; its simplicity borders too closely upon monotony. Its corners are too weak from placing the windows too close.

The cortile of the palace has an open loggia on the ground floor, supporting the second floor by pillars and arches. On each of these pillars are engaged columns of the Doric order, with a Doric entablature. The second story is Ionic, and the third Corinthian, as in the Colosseum. The ensemble is a fine composition wherein Variety plays directly into the hand of Unity.

Baldassare Peruzzi had the good fortune to design, not the largest, but one of the most refined palaces in Rome, the Palazzo Massimi del Portico, or alla Colonne. The family home had been destroyed in

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the sack of Rome, 1527, and the two brothers of the family wanted a palace on the old site, suitable for the uses of two households. One finds, therefore, a generous entrance way and two courts. The building was delightfully adapted to the limitations of the narrow, curving street.



SANGALLO: THE FARNESE PALACE, THE COURT

The columnar entrance loggia may have been designed as a sort of coat of arms to this family "of the columns". The main entrance way is between pairs of Doric columns, set about fifteen feet apart, and flanked by a single column, five feet farther away. Pilasters are used to break up street wall space into agreeable proportions.

The loggia on the second floor of the cortile is



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especially beautiful. It is supported by Ionic columns of the pure Greek style. The moldings are everywhere chaste. The ceiling is coffered in hexagonal forms, richly decorated.

Here the road ends, so far as refinement in classic forms is concerned. The way has passed thru all the degrees of Latinizing influence, until here we get back to pure forms that remind us of the culture of the Greeks. The age may build bigger buildings, hardly better.

There was yet one thing which the architect could do with the classic orders as decoration. He could stretch his columns, making them reach thru two stories. Michelangelo did this in his design for the Capitoline Museum, 1542. No doubt his idea arose out of a desire to unify a composition in the perpendicular. Perhaps he was in protest against the extreme horizontality of the Farnese which was nearing completion at this time. Certainly he was also influenced by his characteristic liking for bigness. The Capitoline has pilasters that run thru its two stories, and seem to carry the cornice and balustrade above. There is no doubt that this innovation opened the way to many excesses in architecture.

As the Renaissance is the voice of Christianity and the embodiment of its doctrines and ideals, so St. Peter's was intended to be the greatest church in Christendom, surpassing St. Sophia of the Eastern church. One must remember, too, that as the shrine of the body of St. Peter, it had a unique position among the churches of the world. On the site had stood an older church, but with it the proud Julius II

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VIEW OF ST. PETER'S AT ROME WITH BERNINI'S APPROACH

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was not content. How much his ideas about a tomb for himself entered into his thinking we cannot be sure, but plans for the tomb and for the new church were coincident.

[Bramante was the original architect.] His plan was for a church in the form of a Greek cross, surmounted by a stupendous dome in the style of the Pantheon. But death prevented his carrying the work very far. Then followed a period of changing architects and changing plans until Michelangelo was appointed in 1546. He rejected all the innovations made upon Bramante's general plan, but increased the height, and changed the structural system of the dome. Later, Maderna took charge, who lengthened out the western arm of the cross, and built the stupid façade that shuts off the effect of the magnificent dome. Only from the back of the church can one get an adequate impression of its mighty mass. Considerable distinction was given to the total effect by the addition of the entrance colonnades by Bernini in the middle of the seventeenth century.

[The dome is the largest in the world, with a diameter of  $137\frac{1}{2}$  feet, practically the same as Brunelleschi's, and a total height of 435 feet. While Michelangelo's outline is different from Bramante's original design and Brunelleschi's, it gives the same magnificent impression of height as the dome at Florence, tho not nearly so pointed as the latter. Of course it is actually many feet higher.]

It sins structurally in the same way as Brunelleschi's. "To make a dome on a large scale a con-



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spicuous object, from the springing to the crown, is a thing that cannot be safely done in masonry. To make it stand at all, resort must be had to extra-



DOME OF ST. PETER'S

neous and hidden means of support, and even these are of uncertain efficiency for any length of time." (Moore, *Renaissance Architecture*.) Michelangelo's faults were, however, only in degree greater than those of Brunelleschi and other Renaissance builders;

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They all failed to realize the value of structural truth in the composite of the beautiful. They allowed their interest in drapery to obscure the truth of nature in the body.

The façade is distinguished for bigness. When one remembers that the total height of the order in the Parthenon is about 45 feet; that the order of the porch of the Pantheon is about 60; and then learns that the Corinthian pilasters on the front of St. Peter's are 108 feet, with capitals 10 feet in height, and a spread of 9 feet; and that above the order is an attic story 39 feet in height, one gets some conception of the stupendous scale on which this front is built. One wishes he might say that a great historian of architecture is entirely wrong when he calls this front contemptible.

The interior corresponds in size with the massive front. The nave is a great barrel vault, 150 feet high and 80 feet wide. The vaulting is coffered. The walls and pillars are brick, still in process of being covered with marble veneer. The transepts and choir are the same length, since the early plan of the Greek cross was adhered to in these parts; and each of them terminates in a semicircle. The tomb of St. Peter is directly under the dome and the high altar, which towers 90 feet above.

It is certain that no one at first sight feels the immensity of the interior, for there are many failures in scale; but when one sees the little pygmies grow into full-sized human beings as they approach from the distances of the church; recalls that 150 feet make ten or more stories; listens to the rolling and echoing

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of the music; and finally looks up thru more than 400 feet of blue haze into the eye of the dome; then St. Peter's casts its spell over one, and he forgives many things which his intellect tells him ought to be different.

St. Peter's was unfortunate in being born late. The Renaissance in architecture had passed its zenith when most of the work was done on this building. Michelangelo, who had more to do with it than any other single man, was not a trained architect. He was past seventy when he came to the task. His tendency toward bigness and exaggeration was reinforced in this case by his zeal for the church. He was zealous to make this the grandest church in Christendom. When, however, one compares it with the earlier St. Sophia at Constantinople, and the marvelous Gothic cathedrals of the North, one cannot escape a feeling of disappointment and longing.

Venice had very definite traditions in architecture, but they were not classical. She had built her great shrine church of St. Mark's after the traditions of the East, and had gathered much Byzantine treasure. But when the Gothic came down from the North, she had fallen in love with it. Her spectacular palace for her doges and the finest palaces of the Grand Canal depended on Gothic for their beauty of ornament. The Gothic suited the temper of the Venetian, and therefore lingered longer here than elsewhere. There is a far more definite mixture of Gothic and Renaissance motives in Venice than in Florence during the Quattrocento. Pointed arches are used in the Renaissance design of the court of



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the Doge's Palace even in the latter part of the century.

While classical garlands and moldings appear as decorative motives early in the century, it was not until 1481 that a building appears fully in the style of the Renaissance. The Palazzo Vendramini, by



LOMBARDO: THE VENDRAMINI PALACE, VENICE

Pietro Lombardo, is one of the many splendid palaces that line the Grand Canal. It is three stories in height, with a strong main cornice. This cornice and its wide frieze, the strong entablature of the second story, and the balustrade, carry a vigorous feeling for the horizontal. Windows and columns are very happily grouped. Three windows are brought

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close together, with a single column separating; then a pair of columns on each side, a window, and another pair of columns at the angle. Each window opening is a large round arch, into which are inserted two smaller round-arched windows with shafted jambs. A circular eye fills the tympanum space. The composition is hardly surpassed in Venice.

The Library of St. Mark's was built about fifty years later, 1536, by Jacopo Tatti, or Sansovino. He was a Florentine, but he caught the Venetian spirit so fully that he was a popular architect, building the Palazzo Cornaro, the Mint, and the Loggetta of the Campanile. The lower story of the library is an open arcade in the Doric order. The spandrels of the arches, the keystones, and the metopes of the frieze are enriched with sculpture. The entablature is inordinately wide, and the error is repeated in the second story where the frieze is loaded with Roman ornamental detail. The order of the second story is Ionic. The archivolt is borne by a secondary order which rests upon a pedestal of the same height as that of the main column. These pedestals determine the height of the characteristic second story balustrade.

There will always be differences of opinion with regard to the artistic success of this design. There are people who demand austerity in architecture; they can never be happy with the florid design of Sansovino. The truth probably is that the architect has here reached the limit. Just as with Ghiberti's doors, we should say, "Thus far and no farther." Beyond lies the way to decadence.

While Venice commanded the best talent and pro-

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duced the most splendid monuments, many provincial towns in her territory were prosperous enough to produce highly trained architects and erect important



SANSOVINO: THE LIBRARY OF ST. MARK, VENICE

buildings. A notable example of this condition is Verona, and the work of Sammicheli there.

He was famous as a military engineer, a builder of fortifications. Naturally his work was characterized by simplicity, directness, and impressive size. The



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Porta del Palio of Verona, an entrance thru the city walls, is severe in its decorative style, but fine in its sense of proportions. The Palazzo Bevilacqua has a strong rusticated lower story, while the second is lightened in effect by the use of columns, some of them with spiral flutings. The Cappella Pellegrini is a circular building drawing its inspiration from the Pantheon at Rome without copying its unique lighting and rather severe interior.



### PART III

#### THE GOLDEN AGE

IN the very nature of things, great masters and great achievement arrive only after long periods of uncertain dreaming and imperfect attainment. The Renaissance started with a vision. To reduce it to form was the problem of the artist. He lacked equipment and training. His hand could not catch and imprison the Gleam. While he was growing in skill, the Vision was growing clearer. Jesus that sat on a throne and judged the world in a far-away time in a land of the dead, came down to earth as a child in a mother's arms. The life that now is took on some of the glory of the life of which man dreamed.

And now, after the travail of the Quattrocento, his ascending skill meets his "Trailing clouds of glory" in that happy moment of every art in all time when the artist has an adequate language in which to tell us of the "vision splendid". It did not, and it never does, last long. Skill grows to more and more, and the vision less and less until it "fades into the light of common day". Art dies, because skill comes to exist for its own sake and the vision has become simple reality, or has been altogether lost.

At Florence, the Golden Age began somewhat before 1500, and lasted thru the early part of the sixteenth century, for the city lost its intellectual



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enthusiasm and political liberty when the Medici were made hereditary rulers in 1530. Rome, also, was affected by foreign invasions, but the reigns of Julius II and Leo X were extremely brilliant in art. Bramante, Raphael, Michelangelo, and many others added luster to this time. Venice, least disturbed of all, maintained a high enthusiasm thruout practically all the sixteenth century.

## CHAPTER X

### LEONARDO DA VINCI AND HIS FOLLOWERS

THE earliest of the great masters was Leonardo da Vinci. He was born in 1452, and did very great work before the beginning of the new century. His distinguished career led him to Florence, Milan, Rome, and finally to the court of Francis I, where he died in 1519.

The dominant characteristic of Leonardo was his intense interest in the natural world and its problems. Where others appealed to the ancients for their knowledge, he interrogated the world about him. He was distinguished as a mathematician and a physicist. He rediscovered the principles of the lever. He knew that light and sound move in waves and applied his principles to the invention of the camera. He manufactured mechanical birds, and made drawings for a flying machine. He designed a breech-loading cannon, and used the wheelbarrow. He recognized that the earth is not the center of the solar system, and that the universe is under the law of gravitation. He was a student of chemistry and geology; a distinguished engineer and an accomplished musician; an expert machinist and the author of a Latin grammar. At one time he is employed on the cathedral at Milan; at another, he is studying the form and anatomy of the horse preparatory to making a great eques-

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trian statue; all the time he carries a sketchbook to catch the subtle expressions of an interesting face or the unconscious pose of some picturesque figure. It may really be said that painting was one of the least accomplishments of such a man.

But painting he knew thoroly, both in theory and in practice. He wrote a treatise on its principles which was almost the only work of the kind in existence. In it, the basic principle, as one would expect, was that the final arbiter was nature, and not the antique, as the humanists maintained. It was a wonderful day for art and for Leonardo when he proclaimed the supremacy of nature over the antique. It meant that he got his truth at first hand, and that his art would be intelligible. Yet it was no reproduction of nature that Leonardo sought. A man of vision, as the great man must always be, he used the material significance of nature, upon which he was very insistent, to reveal its spiritual significance. In the plain facts of nature he put the enigma and the suggested answer; in the depth of mere shadow the mystery of the unknown.

In his practice, he used light and shade as no one before him. He saw the value of shadows, both in getting roundness and reality, but more for their suggestive powers. In his other innovations in technique, he was not so happy. To get depth in his shadows, he used dark pigments, some never before tried. In some cases, these have come through and darkened the picture, in others they have discolored. He attempted also to heighten his colors by means of oil as a medium. In all his work he showed himself



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a born experimenter. Having found out what he wanted from the experiment, he had no care to repeat it for the finished product.

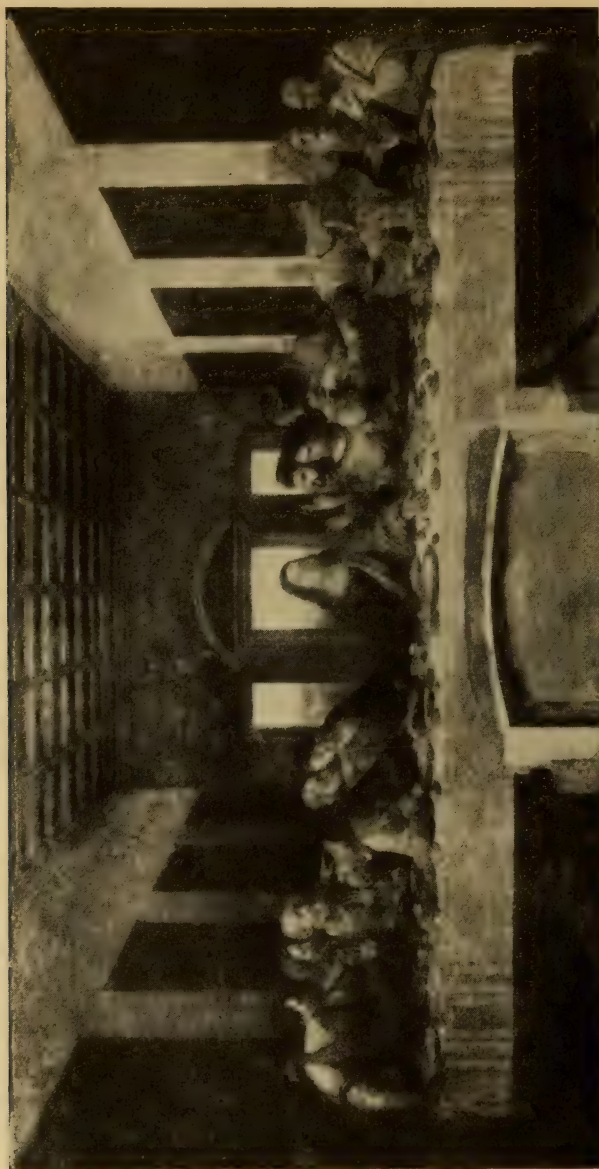
There are very few pictures that we know with certainty were painted by Leonardo. His acknowledged greatness has caused many to be ascribed to him that no doubt he never saw. Of many in the Louvre, only two are unquestioned.

His first known work is an angel in the Baptism of Jesus by Verrocchio. Vasari tells us that this angel was painted one day in the absence of the old master in whose studio Leonardo was at work, and that the master was so mortified at the superior excellence of his pupil's work that he never touched colors more. One can well believe the story, for here are displayed all the charming qualities of Leonardo's mature work.

His masterpiece is *The Last Supper*, painted for the refectory of St. Maria delle Grazie in Milan. The work has suffered in various ways. A door was cut thru the wall on which it was painted and still defaces the lower part of the composition. Napoleon's soldiers used the hall for hay and horses. Worst of all, it was painted with oil, an unsuitable medium for a plaster surface. The use of oil was comparatively new in Italy in the late Quattrocento, and its limitations may not have been understood by Leonardo. Certain it is that the picture was practically a ruin in half a century after it was finished.

The refectory is a long narrow room, with the *Last Supper* painted entirely across one end, twenty-eight feet, and the height of a door above the floor. The tables for the monks were arranged on the other

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LEONARDO DA VINCI: THE LAST SUPPER

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three sides. This fact no doubt influenced Leonardo in his treatment of some of the details. Jesus and his disciples probably reclined at table in the Roman manner; but the monks sat upon benches. Historical accuracy was sacrificed for harmony to environment. Likewise, accessories, as table, cloth, and dishes, were painted to suit the actual furnishings of the monks' dining room.

Whatever concession has here been made to environment, no liberty has been taken with the essentials of the scene. Fortunately that which deeply interested Leonardo, emotional expression, was easily made the dominant motive. Other Last Suppers had been painted, whose measure of success is a solemn group at a solemn meal. Leonardo saw the dramatic possibilities of the narrative, and concentrated all upon that particular moment when Jesus announces that one of them will betray him. That was "lightning out of a clear sky", and created for the artist a "dramatic moment" if ever there was one. It would spoil all the psychological subtlety if Judas were set apart as Ghirlandajo has done.

Immediately upon these words all is consternation and the inevitable question among the innocent rises: "Is it I? You don't mean me?" The delicate variations of this mood and the keen characterizations in accord with narrative and tradition make the soul of the picture.

The composition divides into four groups of three each about the central figure, but there is no question in one's mind about unity. Jesus dominates and the groups are related to this center and properly



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subordinated. He has been active, is now quiescent. The groups on either side show the maximum of action which seems but started in the figures of Simon and Bartholomew at the ends. This graduated, rhythmic movement reminds one of the same fine quality in the East Pediment of the Parthenon where the central action had been accomplished and the maximum of movement is found in the flying messengers on either side, dying away in the Theseus and The Sea at the ends.

The figure of Jesus occupies the central position at table, immediately in front of the central of three painted windows. The beauty of the sky takes the place of the halo of Giotto and Angelico and glorifies in a more plausible way. The controlling mood is resignation to what was deemed inevitable.

The group at the right of Jesus is composed of John, Judas, and Peter. John has the place of honor at the immediate right. He is young, gentle, and lovable, and is therefore overwhelmed by the terrible news of betrayal among friends. Peter, on the contrary, jumps into action, and, while sympathetic with John, demands that he learn more of the meaning of the Master. His left hand rests gently but insistently on John's shoulder. In making this movement he has pushed Judas forward and perhaps has brushed him with his knife which he still holds in his restrained right hand. Judas somewhat convulsively grips the bag with his right hand while a kindred movement with his left creates havoc on the table. Perhaps there is a little straining after effect in these movements of Judas, too much an

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acceptance of the traditional and not enough study of the psychological, yet it is so much better than any other interpretation of Judas in Christian art that it stands alone. One may add that the outstanding character interpretation in the Passion Play at Oberammergau in 1910 and 1922 was that of Judas as given by Zwink and Lang.

The group at the left of Jesus is made up of James the Elder, Thomas, and Philip. It too is very active, compact, and relates itself very closely to the Master. James is horror-stricken, and lifts his arms as if to ward off the terror. Thomas has jumped from his seat and comes close to the master with uplifted single finger. How individual this gesture is and how much it suggests of the character of him who would not believe until he could touch! Philip, a rather handsome young fellow, has risen to expostulate, and perhaps to plead his personal innocence. Here is splendid characterization in a group that is skillfully knit together.

Matthew is the special means of uniting the end group with the one just mentioned. He turns impetuously toward Simon at the end but swings his arms vigorously in the direction of the Master. At the other end James the Younger reaches behind Andrew and touches Peter on the shoulder. Note also how the movement of these end groups is used to preserve the balance of the picture as a whole. One end group swings toward the Peter group; the other swings away from the Philip group; but the Peter group has a strong line away from Jesus while the Philip group bends strongly toward him. The

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total effect is a perfect balance of two groups against two other groups.

The Last Supper is a masterly composition, with



LEONARDO DA VINCI: PASTEL, HEAD OF CHRIST

a keen interpretation of character, fitted very harmoniously to its environment.

In preparation for this great work, Leonardo made many studies of various personalities. For Judas alone, he is said to have made more than forty.



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Perhaps to this list of preparatory sketches belongs the Head of Christ which now hangs upon the walls of the Brera Gallery in Milan. It reminds us somewhat of the Verrocchio type of face, but is rendered with far more sympathy and tenderness. The hair is extremely beautiful; the form and droop of the eyes suggest the spirit of resignation which must have characterized the face of Jesus at the time of the Last Supper; the nose and the mouth are Jewish of a highly refined type. All these things, with the delicate color and poetic line, make this one of the most beautiful pictures of Christ that ever was painted. Of course it is rather feminine, but not more so than other portraits better known. Masaccio gave us almost the only masculine type that may be found in Italian art. Christian theology did not emphasize the manliness of Christ. He was a "lamb led to the slaughter".

The most famous of all the works of Leonardo, either in engineering or in art, is the portrait of Mona Lisa. Vasari tells us, "For Francis del Giocondo, Leonardo undertook to paint the portrait of Mona Lisa, his wife; but after loitering over it for four years, he finally left it unfinished. Mona Lisa was extremely beautiful, and while Leonardo was painting her portrait, he took the precaution of keeping some one constantly near her to sing or play on an instrument or otherwise amuse her, to the end that she might continue cheerful. It was probably in 1500 that Leonardo began this, the most marvelous of all portraits, antique or modern." The praise of Vasari has been echoed by critics from that time to

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LEONARDO DA VINCI: MONA LISA

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this. Some have called her the sphinx of humanity, or the spirit of the Renaissance. In our own day the popularity of this picture has been increased by the fact that it was stolen from the Louvre, and carried to Italy. When it was found, the Italian government returned it to the French.

The picture has suffered much from the hand of time and the cleaner. The blacks of the background have come through, and taken much from the radiance of the original color. The restorer has rubbed away much of the modeling from the back of the hands. The line of the cheek bones has been made prominent in the same way. The eyebrows have completely disappeared.

The picture is representative of a mood and an enthusiasm. Leonardo seems to have done all his work whole-heartedly but erratically. What it was that caused him to be interested in the particular sort of background of this picture, we do not know; it is certainly queer, looking like the icefields of the Arctic. It may be that he wished to make the sharpest kind of contrast between foreground and background. He has succeeded, but in so doing, he has not given us sensuous beauty, tho some find a certain element of intellectual pleasure in the symbolism. However, it is only Leonardo who would dare to do such a thing; it would hardly be called high art in the work of any one else.

The figure of the lady is most interesting. Her hands are rather prominent, and tho they have lost very much of their modeling, the beauty of proportions in the fingers makes this a pair of hands famous



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in art. Her neck is short and strong; her chin is small; her mouth bears the so-called "Mona Lisa smile"; her nostrils have a slight curl; her eyes are rather weary.

What passing mood or type of character did the artist wish to portray? The guesses and the rhapsodies have been many, but the truth will never be known. I suspect that he wished to give a truthful presentment of Mona Lisa at a moment when the facial muscles were in a state of slight tension. This it is that causes her to respond to the varying moods of the spectator, and gives her the so-called mystery. If the muscles are in tension without any being pronouncedly tense, one may see the coming of a smile, of a sneer, or of sadness. It is thus with the Mona Lisa. It seems that the problem of Leonardo was a very simple one to him,—to place the muscles in a state of delicate tension; all the rest we have read into the picture. Frans Hals in his Laughing Cavalier has attempted the same problem with great success, but we hear no rhapsodies over the mystery of it.

Leaving all the rhapsodies and questions of debate behind, there is praise enough for the Mona Lisa. It is the first mobile face of the Renaissance, the first in which the soul plays hide-and-seek among the muscles of the face.

The queer background of the Mona Lisa is repeated in the Virgin of the Rocks, suggesting that these two pictures belong to the same general period of Leonardo's activity; for it was not like him to continue the same thought or mood for any length of time. We see

## DA VINCI AND FOLLOWERS

the greenish-blue of the icy background thru the crevices of a cave, or under an overhanging rock. The explanation for this background in this picture is more elusive even than in the *Mona Lisa*. We cannot fall back upon the idea of contrast. The reason may be found in some mystic symbolism that Leonardo attached to the idea of the Madonna, or only a fresh solution of a scientific and technical problem.

The grouping is good, but the poses are somewhat stiff. We have here more of the old ecclesiastical than we usually have in Leonardo. The Madonna is somewhat sad, as in Botticelli.

The little John the

Baptist is a child of the old tradition, rather than a boy with the mischievous freedom of childhood. Perhaps the angel has the finest face of all, suggesting more of Leonardo's creative ability than anything else in the picture. In the Louvre version of this



LEONARDO DA VINCI: VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS

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subject the angel does not look out of the picture nor point to John the Baptist. (Perhaps the Louvre picture is the original.)

In 1504 the Signory of Florence gave him a commission for the decoration of a wall of the Hall of the Grand Council in the Palazzo Vecchio. The city had just emerged safely from some trying political experiences and the decoration of this hall, dedicated to liberal institutions, was like a pæan of victory. Perhaps it was also felt that an important commission was due Leonardo, 52, ripe with experience, and honored by other and rival cities. No doubt the success of the younger Michelangelo with his David was a considerable factor.

He chose as his subject the Battle of Anghiari, 1440. His finished cartoon and the portion of it that was transferred to the wall of the palace both perished, and all that is left to us is a fragment that was copied by Rubens at the time of his visit to Florence in 1607. The choice of a theme was probably influenced by Leonardo's interest in horses. He had made an exhaustive study of the figure of the horse for his equestrian statue of Sforza that had been set up in plaster in a square at Milan, and had perished because it was made a mark for the arrows of the invading French soldiers. The conception of this statue is said to have been both magnificent and most sympathetic in its treatment of the horse. The same interest in the horse is displayed in a sketch for an Adoration of the Magi in the Uffizzi. In the later days of his life, when he was not trammelled by ecclesiastical tradition, but was commissioned to



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produce something that had the fire and action of Florentine history in it, he made the horse the center of interest in his composition, or at least equal to man in action.

It is no exaggeration to say that he makes these horses have passions. He makes them feel as in-



LEONARDO DA VINCI: BATTLE OF ANGIARI

tensely as do the men, without in any sense making them human. The complexity of line that circles about and centers the group, the lighter values that enclose the dark mass over which towers a great soldier and out of which gleams the fire of a horse's eye, make this a wonderfully articulated and unified composition, though it is full of the swiftest movement and contrasting action. For what it attempts,

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it would be difficult to find its superior in all the range of art.

This commission, with the one given to Michelangelo for a similar decoration, had a mighty influence upon art. The year 1504 is almost as important as 1401. Bartolommeo who, because of his sorrow for Savonarola and sympathy for his ideas, had burned his paintings and renounced his brush, came out of his retirement, took up his brush, and painted some beautiful pictures that have about them the halo of Savonarola. Raphael came down from the hills of Umbria to study these great works and to heighten his style. Michelangelo caught the attention of the great Julius, and was called from his home city to grace the city of Rome for almost sixty years of his life.

The drawings of Leonardo are justly famous, and some of them are of surpassing beauty. He is the magician who transforms the hard and correct lines of a Verrocchio into the soft light and shade that plays in gentle tresses and over bewitching faces. He is at once the transition from the older to the newer, and the first of the glories of the High Renaissance.

As might be expected, Leonardo left behind him artists that perpetuated his influence both at Milan and Florence. The man who most definitely represents his power at Milan was Luini, who is at the same time the greatest painter of the Lombard school. Many of his frescoes have been taken from the walls, and are now preserved in the Brera gallery at Milan. The Burial of St. Catherine is one of the most pretentious and, at the same time, well-preserved of these. The composition has a strong ten-

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LEONARDO DA VINCI: DRAWING, STUDY FOR HEAD OF MADONNA



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dency toward the decorative line; that is, there is a subdual of detail and an arrangement of the lines to make a decorative pattern. The lines of the figures of the sarcophagus have been chosen to correspond to the lines of the angel's wings, and to their placement in the group.

Notwithstanding this tendency toward the decorative line, and unreality, the composition is surpris-



LUINI: BURIAL OF ST. CATHERINE

ingly good in the portrayal of movement. It is impossible not to think that the body of St. Catherine is being lowered into the tomb.

The particular quality in this picture that shows the influence of Leonardo is the delicate use of light and dark. The values are not extreme and are carefully graded. One can easily see, however, that Luini has none of the dashing originality of Leonardo; his chief qualities are more modest ones of delicate grace and charming purity.

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Leonardo's manner was carried to Siena by Giovannantonio Bazzi, or, as he is better known, Il Sodoma. He was born in Lombardy and was a pupil of Leonardo's; but he wandered away and did most of his work at Siena and Rome. At Siena he was very popular, and for this reason, is often classified as a Siennese artist. His style is illustrated by the figure of Eve, from a fresco in the museum at Siena, and the figure of St. Sebastian from a banner painted in oil, now in the Uffizzi at Florence. Both of them are admired for their grace of pose and beauty of form. The light and shade is soft and appealing; the landscapes are beautiful with lines that wind into the distance; and the figures are made significant with emotion. Eve is watching Christ take Abel by the hand, and Sebastian looks up at the angel with a crown for his martyrdom.

Other followers of da Vinci in north Italy were Andrea Solario and Marco da Oggioni, who copied the Last Supper many times; Beltraffio, who approximated his master's manner so closely that some of his pictures have been attributed to Leonardo; Bernardino de' Conti, some of whose Madonna faces are strong and noble, and Ambrogio de Predis, who is the probable author of a very beautiful portrait that goes under the name of Beatrice d'Este. The face is taken in profile, a pose for which Ambrogio was famous. The color is extremely rich and strong, with the complementaries, red and green, predominating. The lights are wonderfully clear and brilliant. Did ever a man give the reflected lights of precious stones more truthfully than has Ambrogio in the brooch on

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this woman's breast and in the beads that adorn her hair? The lines of the composition are unusually



DE PREDIS: BEATRICE D'ESTE

sharp; for example, the line of the neck and that of her low-cut dress.

On the other hand, there are beautiful, subtle curves that relieve any feeling of annoyance at these



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sharp lines. The curve in the beads and in the lines of the body are most charming. The profile of the face is very interesting, but is not characterized by Greek regularity of features. Her nose is quite unconventional, her mouth is simple in line, her eye is brilliant in light and dark. The face is beautiful for its informality rather than for its conventional balance and symmetry.

## CHAPTER XI

### FRA BARTOLOMMEO AND ANDREA DEL SARTO

FLORENCE that had given birth to so many masters in the Quattrocento was asked to share them with other parts of Italy in the period that followed. Leonardo spent much of his time at Milan, and for patrons other than the Medici. Raphael tarried awhile, and passed on to Rome. Michelangelo wavered back and forth between Florence and Rome. Rival patrons bid against each other for the services of the great masters. The two men who seem to be most nearly fixtures at Florence were Andrea del Sarto and Bartolommeo, and even Andrea was lured away to the court of France for a time.

Bartolommeo had been a painter in the days of Savonarola's preaching against vanities, but had piled his canvases on the flames in his earnest desire to be clean. When his idol was himself lost in the flames in the great square before the Palazzo Vecchio, Bartolommeo retired to a monastery and renounced art. When the city buzzed with delight and acclaim for the great work of Leonardo and Michelangelo in the Hall of the Grand Council, the monk was again inspired to take up his brush. Tho the early work which he did under the name of Baccio has

## BARTOLOMMEO AND DEL SARTO

largely disappeared, the loss is probably not great, and we may well be satisfied with what he did under the spell of Leonardo and Michelangelo.

Bartolommeo's range was narrow, and he is rarely inspired, even within this narrow range. He has nothing of the epic or dramatic. He went down to Rome, lured by the fame of the great work which Michelangelo was doing in the Sistine Chapel, and essayed big things. His conspicuous effort in this manner is the St. Mark of the Pitti, in heroic size, and his failure in imitating the mighty master of the human form was just as conspicuous. He was not a colorist. He seems to have put on his color after his drawing was practically complete. There is in the Uffizzi a complete drawing, and the finished color piece; and from these one realizes that we should enjoy his work almost as well, if not quite, were all of them monochromes. His great excellence was his stately, triangular arrangement of saintly figures in situations of calm and dignity. This pyramidal form of composition was probably developed from Leonardo's new forms, and no doubt influenced Raphael to introduce the figure of John the Baptist into his arrangements of Mother and Child.

In his effort to portray the face of his friend and ideal, Savonarola, he is quite within his range. There are two important examples. One is his friend in the guise of St. Peter Martyr, who was assassinated with a blow from an ax upon his head. The other is that well-known portrait that hangs in his old cell at San Marco. The face is that of the uncompromising monk who preached the sermons of John the Baptist



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to the astonished Florentines of 1491, and who refused, in any way, to do reverence to the most powerful man in Florence. It is not a beautiful face, but it is strangely powerful (page 146).

No doubt Bartolommeo's masterpiece is the *Deposition*, one of his latest works. The distribution of



BARTOLOMMEO: PIETA

light and shade is notable. The lighter values of the body of Jesus form the center of the composition, while the lower values are compactly distributed about it. The grouping, too, is well-ordered, and the poses are finely adapted to characterization. Joseph of Arimathea is beautifully placed as the support of the head. Mary the Mother bends and touches her

## BARTOLOMMEO AND DEL SARTO

son in the most fitting way. Mary Magdalene the Beautiful embraces the feet in abject submission and heartfelt devotion. The picture does not have the adorable landscape of Perugino, the mysterious shadows of Francia, nor the poignant grief of Titian, but its lack of dependence on accessories, its simple interest in tenderness of feeling, make it one of the finest presentments in painting of this touching moment in the history of the Man of Galilee.

Fra Bartolommeo had a friend and collaborator in Mariotto Albertinelli. When Savonarola paid the price, one took the monk's cowl and the other seems to have tried to drown his sorrows in drink and other excesses. His good impulses and his finest art are summed up in one picture, *The Visitation*, which is probably not surpassed by any picture in Italian art on the same theme.

You know the story of the Visitation as it is told in the second chapter of Luke. After the Annunciation, Mary goes into the hill country to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, unto whom has come the knowledge that she is to be the mother of him whom we call John the Baptist. Albertinelli has pictured the meeting on the green sward in a colonnade that no doubt fitted the church architecture where the picture was to be placed. Behind the women is the big open sky that is in sharp contrast with the formal lines of the architecture. Whether Albertinelli had ever been up in the hill country of Umbria or not, at least he enjoyed the hills of Florence from whose tops he could see the depth and spaciousness of the blue. For a Florentine of this time, he has painted

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ALBERTINELLI: VISITATION



## BARTOLOMMEO AND DEL SARTO

a most wonderful sky. We must remember that landscape at no time was a great joy to a Florentine, and that there are but few Italian artists who even use it as an accessory in the picture. All the more praise to one who suggests such love for the great depth as characterized the Dutch School of more than a century later.

Against this infinity of blue, Albertinelli has massed the dark figures of Mary and Elizabeth. The older of them bends a little lower, for to her has come the lesser honor. The faces are wonderfully pure and beautiful. Their emotion is restrained, but adequate. The picture is a sympathetic interpretation of a supreme moment in the lives of two great mothers. Albertinelli needs no other memorial to insure the regard of men and women, so long as the Christian story is enshrined in their hearts.

Andrea del Sarto was connected with Bartolommeo as a student. He is differentiated by the fact that he was a lover of color, while Bartolommeo represents the old Florentine tradition of line studies, with the consequent dependence on form for expression. A casual glance at Andrea's work will show how little he depended on lines; for, if one tries to trace them, he finds how elusive they are, how much the artist is depending on color and chiaroscuro.

He was a student of Piero di Cosimo and of Bartolommeo. He copied the famous cartoons of the year 1504, and spent his hours in the Brancacci Chapel at the feet of Masaccio. While growing always in maturity and power, he lived a carefree

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life among his artist friends. His first important commission was for the decoration of the atrium of the church of the Annunziata. The pay offered was low but the location of the pictures was fine, and he accepted the commission. He did his best, and fresco reaches a very high mark in these pictures. In 1513, he married Lucrezia, who seems to have menaced his popularity and driven away most of his growing number of students. In 1518, at the invitation of Francis I, he went to France; but in 1519, he was back in Florence. Whether true or not, it is said that he spent the money of Francis upon his private establishment, and did not return to France. Prosperity once more came to him. He had no rival in Florence at this time; for Leonardo was dead, while Raphael and Michelangelo had gone to Rome. His death came in 1531 from a visitation of the plague.

Andrea seems to have been unfortunate in his choice of a wife, who was very materialistic in her ideals, prized art as a means of making money to lavish upon her own selfish indulgences, and never cared for great inspirations. Most unfortunate of all was Andrea's own temperament, which was satisfied with fine craftsmanship. His "reach" did not exceed his "grasp".

But with all his limitations, Andrea was a great artist. First of all, he was an extremely fine draughtsman. It would be difficult to find a bit of really bad drawing in all his work. Again, he was the finest of the Florentines in color. A school that could not boast of its magnificent color harmonies was a poor

## BARTOLOMMEO AND DEL SARTO

environment for one who had a keen color sense. What he might have accomplished among the Venetians, who composed in color, one cannot tell, but no doubt far more than he accomplished where color was secondary. His good drawings and his fine color would there have been an ideal combination. As it is he is noted for the blending of them in what the Italians call *sfumato*. With all his fine draughtsmanship, he overloads his figures with drapery, so that much of their material significance is lost.

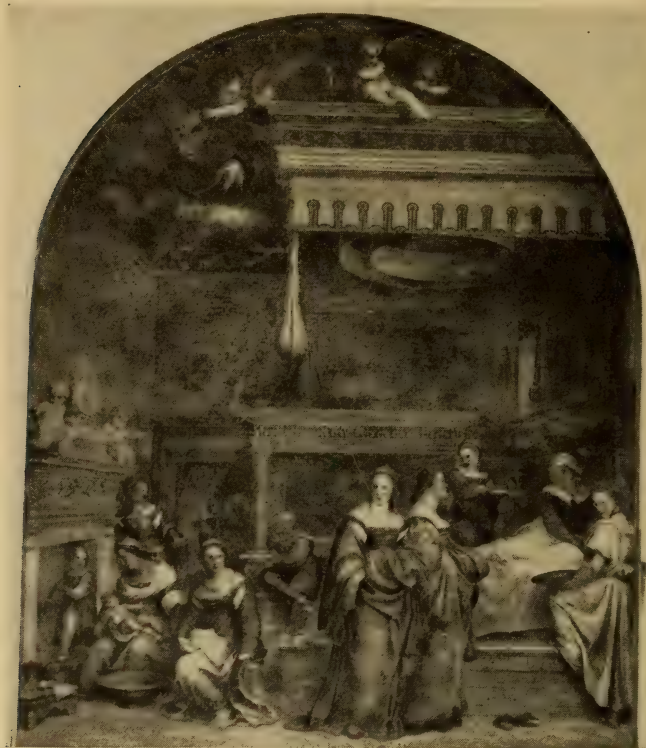
As already noted, the first important painting of Andrea was done in the atrium of the church of the Annunziata. One of the best of these frescoes is the Birth of the Virgin. The work dates from about 1514, the year after Andrea's marriage, and marks the appearance of Lucrezia in his work, who poses as one of the dames in the foreground of the picture. These two stately women illustrate, thus early in his career, the artist's love for drapery. The composition is somewhat loose. At the right is Anne the mother, attended by servants; in the foreground are two women who have no vital connection with either group, yet they are the means upon which Andrea relied to bring his two focal points into unity; at the left is a fireplace around which is another group. The color is brilliant, considering that oil is not the medium.

The Annunciation is a picture of uncertain date. Some would place it among the very latest of Andrea's works. Whatever may be the date, it is one of the most spiritual of the artist's conceptions, and by some is rated as the finest interpretation of the theme



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

of the Annunciation. The drapery at the upper corners is a later addition. The composition easily divides into two very equal parts by drawing a line



ANDREA DEL SARTO: BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN

from top to bottom thru the middle, but it is united by the overlapping triangles and by mutual attraction of the two figures. Some of Andrea's faults are seen in the type of the Madonna and in her drapery, but her charm notwithstanding is very

## BARTOLOMMEO AND DEL SARTO

considerable. The fullness of the drapery of the angel is here demanded by the form of the composition, to give base to the triangle. The colors are soft but brilliant; the light and dark beautifully graded; and there is real restraint in the use of accessories, particularly in the use of vacant space in the middle background.

In 1517 Andrea reached high-water mark in his *Madonna of the Harpies*. The picture is about 6 x 7 feet in size, and is one of the treasures of the Uffizzi gallery. The composition is comparatively simple and very formal. Upon a pedestal that is decorated in relief with the creatures that give name to the picture stands the mother, holding the child in her right arm and a book in the left. At her feet on either side are two angels. The composition is amplified by the figure of John on the right of the picture, and St. Francis on the left. These two figures, both in position and in pose, fill out the formal balance of the picture. Everything has been arranged in rhythmic proportions. The right side of the picture is divided into thirds; the figure of the madonna with the pedestal is divided into thirds; the top of the picture easily divides into fourths. The dominant design is that of the triangle, which Andrea borrowed from the work of Bartolommeo. This formal balance in a triangle does not have the sense of articulation that one gets from radiation, and some other forms, so that the picture seems to some to be lacking in unity. This same feeling is carried further by the perception that John and St. Francis have no vital connection with the main action of the picture.

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ANDREA DEL SARTO: MADONNA OF THE HARPIES



## BARTOLOMMEO AND DEL SARTO

The picture has the excellences and faults of Andrea. The Madonna has a great abundance of drapery; the figure of St. Francis shows a tendency toward the same fault. Along with correct drawing, there is a skillful and charming blending of color and line. The color harmony is one of Andrea's most pleasing and is deservedly popular.

The Madonna, for whom Lucrezia no doubt posed, has fine dignity that befits her exaltation. In contrast to the dignity of the mother is the playfulness and naturalness of the child and the angels. The boy below, whose face is in the shadow, is a very human creature, even if he does wear wings. One cannot help feeling that he is having a jolly good time with the boy in the mother's arms. No doubt that extended left foot rises and falls in fear lest the angel tickle the toes. The boy Jesus has a fine child's body, soft silken hair, and a pure but mischievous face.

Of course this is not the highest type of the Madonna. It is not the greatest illustration, but is deserving of more popularity than it has. The general notion of the public seems to be that Andrea's work is altogether without inspiration. One might admit this point of view, and yet say that the formality and unreality of the picture make it one of the most splendid altarpieces produced by the Florentine school.

The beauty and naturalness of the children in the Madonna of the Harpies was no accident. Andrea seemed to love children, and this sympathy is shown most beautifully in the Putti, or Cherubs. Take away the wings of these little boys and they have

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

lost nothing as interesting human creatures. Some pretty emotion is lurking behind their eyes, mouths, and seeking expression in action. It is the joy of some child secret with which they expect to surprise someone they love.



ANDREA DEL SARTO: PUTTI

Andrea painted more than one Assumption of the Virgin, that most inspiring theme for the artist who lives in visions. For Andrea, it was too grand. The church belief was that the Madonna rose from her grave and was carried to the sky to become the queen of heaven. In Andrea's Assumption, the disciples are gathered about the empty tomb. Some of them seem to have caught the significance of the moment and the action, while others are but poses for Andrea. Margaret of Cortona and Nicholas of Bari are no doubt patron saints of the church for which this was painted, but this does not absolve Andrea from the necessity of making them real

## BARTOLOMMEO AND DEL SARTO

units of his composition. If they are introduced, they must feel the scene, and not look out at us as Nicholas does, oblivious of the stirring action that Andrea is attempting to portray.



ANDREA DEL SARTO: ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN

The whole lower group is but slightly connected with the action of the upper group. Herein is the fundamental fault of the picture. Nothing can atone for lack of unity.



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

The action of the upper group should be clearly suggestive of motion upward. But the group is placed so close to the frame that it is difficult to think of the figure as rising; for there is no space into which she may rise. Nor does her look, nor her uplifted hands, help greatly in creating the impression of uplift. The angels are looking downward, and create the idea that the Madonna is coming down out of heaven rather than going up to it.

Neither as a composition nor as an interpretation of the theme is the Assumption worthy of the master. And yet this picture was painted about 1526 when Andrea, forty years of age, should have wielded a most facile brush and should have been inspired by a most fertile imagination.

Not all the work of this period was uninspired. The beautiful fresco in the cloister of the Annunziata is among his very best works. It portrays a moment of rest in the Flight into Egypt, but is called *Madonna del Sacco*. The unique thing about this picture is its scheme of composition, which was the real source of failure in the Assumption. It is built in a system of triangles that respond to the bounding line of the lunette. The heads of Joseph and of Mary become the apexes of the two main angles. Then there are numberless lines, rhythmically adjusted to these lines of bisection,—perpendiculars, parallels, that contrast harmoniously with the sweep of the circle that bounds the whole composition. No doubt it was the simplicity in complexity of this composition that elicited the praise of Michelangelo.

With Andrea's death in 1531, the great days of

BARTOLOMMEO AND DEL SARTO



ANDREA DEL SARTO: MADONNA OF THE SACK

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Florentine art came to an end. Rome and the popes had absorbed the great artists who were yet alive, and the petty princes of the Medici who had ingloriously become the hereditary rulers of Florence, made the call for small men only. Two followers kept the flame of art flickering for a time. Franciabigio was fairly successful in portrait painting, and Pontormo was so close an imitator of del Sarto that their works have, in some cases, been confused. By the middle of the century the glory of Florentine art had passed into history.



## CHAPTER XII

### RAPHAEL

THE third great master of the High Renaissance was Raphael. He was born at Urbino, 1483, and for this reason is often called the Urbinate. His father was a painter at the court of Urbino. It was in this aristocratic art atmosphere that the boy grew up, but before he was twelve years of age, both his father and his mother were dead. Friends and relatives came to his relief, for the boy was of a lovable disposition, and he was soon in the studio of Timoteo Viti. He probably did not learn much about art under this master, but he did learn much from Perugino, who was noted, you remember, for his pious old men and his soft landscapes among the Umbrian hills. These characteristics of piety in figures and delicacy of landscape background persisted in all Raphael's later work. The student adopted so much of his master's style that the first period of his art is called the Peruginesque, from 1500 to 1504. The most important picture of this first period is the Sposalizio, now in the Brera Gallery at Milan.

Attracted by the supreme works of Leonardo and Michelangelo for the decoration of the Council Hall at Florence, Raphael went down to that city, and, tho a stranger at the beginning, soon made friends of the foremost in Florence, particularly with Barto-

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lomleo. From this master, he learned how to develop his composition in forms of the triangle. He went down to the Brancacci Chapel, and no doubt was fired by Masaccio's work in the Tribute Money. From Leonardo, he learned much about modeling, and the use of light and dark. From Michelangelo's David, he learned the power of an accurate study of the human figure. To this Florentine period of four years from 1504 to 1508 belong some of his finest Madonnas—the Grand Duke, the Cardellino, and La Belle Jardiniere.

In the year 1508 on the recommendation of his friend Bramante, Raphael was called to Rome and into the service of Julius II. He was commissioned to decorate one of a series of papal offices, called the Stanza della Segnatura. In many respects, the artist's work in this room is his finest. At this time he was great enough to get the commission, but he was not great enough to have the dictating interference of the pope in choosing subjects and the method of treating them. He worked later at the decoration of other rooms in the Vatican, but in these he was not free.

On the death of Bramante in 1514, he was appointed supervising architect of St. Peter's, a task for which he was in no way fitted, and which he furthered in no way worth the mention. In 1515 he was appointed Inspector of Antiquities, another task for which he had no preparation and little enthusiasm. These duties are suggestive of the many unwise demands that were made upon the time and talent of one of the most obliging men of his generation. In

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1520, he contracted a fever, probably from his work in the excavations, and after a very short illness, death came. At the time he was working upon his painting of the Transfiguration, and this picture had the honor of being carried in his funeral procession. Such was his gentleness, along with the possession of unusual talent, that it is no exaggeration to say he was the most beloved artist that ever lived. For his short life of thirty-seven years, he left behind him a tremendous number of works of high quality.

Raphael's first important work, as has already been stated, is the Betrothal of the Virgin. In the foreground is a group, of which the High Priest is the center; in the background is an Italian version of Solomon's temple. No doubt the composition would be much improved by the omission of the temple, for it is strangely inaccurate and detracts much from the unity of the whole.

The group in the foreground is a perfectly balanced composition, even as to the number of figures on either side. The women are painted with far more insight and reality than are the men. Thus early do we find Raphael failing to realize the masculinity of men, but portraying sympathetically the femininity of women. The beautiful creature that he has placed in the foreground at the extreme left is one of the treasures of his art. She belongs, not to the intellectual type nor to the athletic, but is a charming example of the receptive and lovable.

The men all bear sticks, or dry rods. This is in accord with a tradition which related that Mary had many suitors, that the matter was referred to the



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RAPHAEL: THE BETROTHAL OF THE VIRGIN

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High Priest, and that he decided the matter by giving to each of them a dry rod, saying that the rod of the proper man would bud. You will note that the rod of Joseph has something on the end that reminds one of the Rose of Sharon. The young dude in the foreground is expressing his disgust with the whole situation by breaking his rod upon his knee.

The absence of emotional expression suitable to the occasion is very striking, both among the men and the women. This means that the figures are poses, rather than actors. It is an idealized Betrothal of the Virgin, not what actually happened. Nor is this statement necessarily adverse criticism of the composition. Our criticism depends upon what we make the elements of a good altarpiece.

The picture is a splendid piece of color and is full of that placid, serene beauty that forms the charm of much of Raphael's best work.

The distinctive work of Raphael's second, or Florentine, period was his madonnas, tho this subject never seemed to pall on him, even to the end of his life. It is neither possible nor profitable to consider all of these, and we shall, therefore, confine ourselves to five that represent all his different art periods. These are in the approximate order of their production, the Grand Duke, the Cardellino, La Belle Jardinière, della Sedia, and the Sistine. Making a general comparison of these pictures, we find that the earliest, the Grand Duke, has but two figures; his latest, the Sistine, has six. Again, the type of woman who represents the madonna changes and develops. The earlier uses the Perugino type;

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RAPHAEL: MADONNA OF THE GRAND DUKE



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the Madonna of the Goldfinch is its mature form. In the Madonna of the Chair, she is an Oriental. In the Sistine, she approximates more closely to the democratic and universal.

The child, also, passes thru stages of development. At first, he is the ecclesiastical child, tho brought very close to the natural. The madonna of the Grand Duke presents her child in much of the spirit of the old altarpieces. In the Madonna of the Goldfinch, Jesus has a beautiful little body, but we can see that he is meant to be a child mature far beyond his years. In *La Belle Jardinière*, John becomes the worshipper, as we also find in the Madonna of the Chair. In the Sistine, Raphael has developed the idea of precocity on the part of the Christ child by the very natural motive of the intensity of the light. He acts as if he had awakened from sleep, and was alarmed by his strange surroundings.

This comparative study shows that Raphael had not altogether worked out his vein at the end of his short life, as some critics would have us believe, but that his vision was fresh and saner in his later years.

Now let us look at these pictures more in detail. The earliest of his Madonnas has a very simple background. The color is very rich tho delicate. The virgin has a look of abashment, which indicates very clearly that she has no selfish pride. It is her feeling of unworthiness and her sense of responsibility that make her eyes drop. She knows that she is the Madonna, but wonders why among all the women of the world she has been chosen for this high honor.

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RAPHAEL: MADONNA OF THE GOLDFINCH

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The Madonna del Cardellino is a fine combination of charming grace and feminine strength. The Madonna of the Grand Duke would fall under the burden of a great sorrow, but the Cardellino has the strength to endure, even if she has not the power to see the greatness of the future, and visions of the joy that comes thru struggle and sorrow. She has been reading and teaching. Tho she is tender in humoring the whims of the children, she looks at them from above. She finds her joys in her books and in meditation, rather than in her child or in the beautiful landscape in which Raphael has so finely placed her.

La Belle Jardinière is more unified in composition than either of the two pictures just mentioned. The landscape is one of the finest of Raphael's, but he has, in no way, allowed it to take the first place in interest. The figures in the foreground perfectly dominate the whole. It is too early for an artist to find his inspiration in the world of nature,—the haze of the distant hills, the spires that rhyme with the trees, or the beautiful reflections from the quiet surface of the lake.

The Madonna of the Chair is one of the most popular of Raphael's Madonnas, because it gets its motive from the mother's love that cuddles her child to her bosom, and feels the pride of personal possession. It appeals to our common experience, to our love of the innocents who brighten the home and give it meaning. The mother is a fine example of the self-centered creature, the selfish pride that we find in a woman with little outlook. Her Oriental type and her bright draperies intensify the idea. The picture



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is satisfactory if one attaches to the Madonna nothing more than the idea of motherhood.

Without question, the greatest of Raphael's Madonnas is the Sistine, which was painted at the very



RAPHAEL: MADONNA OF THE CHAIR

end of his life in 1518 and 1519. It is the largest of his Madonnas, 7 x 9½ feet. It was painted for the church of San Sisto at Piacenza, and for this reason takes its name of the Sistine, or Sixtine.

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The picture is admittedly great, but is far from perfect. The element of discord is in the accessories. In the first place, note those droll little creatures at the bottom of the composition. Are they in the sky, at the opening of a window, or hanging to the picture frame? Why are these "southern pickaninnies" introduced? The story that they are an afterthought of Raphael and were introduced as the portraits of two interesting children that came Raphael's way is stupid in its absurdity. They can be justified only as fillers of space, and this at once brings discredit upon the composition.

Again, note the curtains in the upper corners, very material and mundane. Are they intended for curtains of the sky? Or for a window of the earth? If they belong to a window, then St. Sixtus stands upon the clouds of the sky, while his robe touches the window jamb, and his triple crown rests upon its sill.

The middle portion of the picture, however, is grand in its conception. The sky is filled with an angel throng, whose faces are hidden by an intense golden light save toward the top. There the ethereal takes form in cherub heads. A great cloud is the throne on which the Madonna stands. Her mantle swings gracefully over a flexile body, and balances most happily against the body of the child on her right arm. But the skillful handling of lines and masses is quickly forgotten when one contemplates the faces. The mother's eyes are opened wide and her lips are ready for exclamation. From her throne of cloud, she looks down upon the big, old world. It seems so big, and she is so small. And her boy!

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RAPHAEL: SISTINE MADONNA



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How can he ever be the leader of so many, of Jew and Roman, of Greek and Barbarian? How can she ever measure up to her great responsibility? Why shouldn't her eyes reveal surprise and fear, even dread?

The boy, also, has a mixture of emotions. Has he just wakened from a sound sleep under the brilliancy of the light, and knows not where he is and what has happened? Or does he see what his mother sees? And does the vision lay the heavy burden of his future mission upon him? Does he already taste the cup that would not pass?

Whether the mother is frightened by her unaccustomed position or looks with apprehension at her own responsibility and the future of her child; whether the boy is alarmed at the unusual or sees with divine vision the burden of the world already laid upon him, in either case the picture is entirely plausible. In no conception of the Madonna was the supernatural element more necessary, and in none has it been more happily blended with the natural.

Now turn back and note how the accessories all interfere with the grandeur of the central idea. Of what value are the Pope and Santa Barbara in pointing the moral to a tale that is already plain? And portières and the droll, rolling eyes of cherubs or pickaninnies! They all weaken and cheapen the beautiful spiritual significance of the central idea, and are therefore real impertinences. They are only good as fillers of space, and the space they fill was not needed.

The ensemble, then, is incoherent and inharmonious; a part of it is all that is worthy, but this part

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is magnificent. The Madonna and Child are so fine in type, they are part of so splendid a piece of color, and they interpret so fully a most significant element of the Christian faith that the Sistine Madonna seems destined to hold its place among the great masterpieces of all the ages.

Coming back to Raphael's Florentine period, 1504 to 1508, let us pause a moment on his illustration of the Entombment. It is said that this is largely an independent composition. We must remember that Raphael was a great assimilator, and that most of his ideas and compositions were suggested by others. It is not meant by this to detract from his honor or greatness; for all of the great artists have been great borrowers. The question is not whether a man has borrowed, but what has he done with what he borrowed. The action in this picture suggests that Raphael must have been under the influence of Michelangelo, for we have a portrayal of strong action and even stronger emotion. The massing is compact, but the lines are chaotic and without dignity. The emotion is strained and violent. Vigorous action and emotion are not for Raphael. When one compares this with Titian's Entombment, he sees how far this picture falls below the standard of a masterpiece. (See Chap. XIV.)

In 1508 Raphael was invited to Rome. He was commissioned by Julius II to decorate an office in the Vatican, the della Segnatura. It is fairly certain that the decoration had already been started by Sodoma, but none of his design remains, unless it be the papal arms in the center of the ceiling vaulting. It

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may well be that Raphael was indebted to Sodoma far more than any one suspects, for the design called for more learning than is usually credited to Raphael.

The room has windows on two sides, the north and the south. The ceiling is a domical vault with convex surfaces that probably cover groin ribs. Accepting the architecture as a basis for his design, Raphael divided his space into four parts with three smaller divisions in each one of the parts. His plan was to glorify four great departments of thought—Philosophy, Religion, the State, and Art. Accordingly, he painted in the angles of the vaulting, around the papal arms, four symbolic figures that personified each of these ideas. Then, in medallions upon the wide groin ribs, or diagonals, he painted scenes that should suggest the main idea in action. Down on the side walls, he further elaborated the idea with large assemblies that have given the room its fame.

On that part of the ceiling corresponding to the west wall, he has painted the figure of Theology, carried upon the clouds and pointing down toward the earth. Two cherubs that attend her bear the inscription *Notitia Divinarum Rerum*, Knowledge of Things Divine. The background, like all the ceiling work, is painted to resemble mosaic, the fine art of the early Christians. The design of the encircling frame is also a mosaic design. The figure is light and airy tho it carries no essential characteristic of theology and is known by its title and accessories only.

The scene that accompanies this medallion on the ceiling is the Fall of Man. The great scene on the



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side wall, commonly called the Dispute of the Sacrament, would better be called the Glorification of the Faith, meaning faith in the doctrine of transubstantiation. It is hardly reasonable that Raphael would have painted in the Vatican a scene which suggested a dispute among church officials over doctrine. The presence of the altar and the upraised host suggest its glorification rather than an argument about it.

The top of the composition is filled with light, not such as our men with their scientific and artistic knowledge of the glories of light might paint, but a beautiful decorative pattern, shot thru with gold and the sparkle of precious stones, that fills the eye and stirs the mind. In a half circle at the top is a group of flying figures that are splendidly decorative in every sense. These beautiful angels form the guard of honor for the Father, who occupies the center of the upper part of the picture. Below him is the figure of Jesus, attended on either side by his mother and John the Baptist, and circled by a halo of winged heads of cherubs. Below him is the dove, completing the Trinity. At right and left, in a semi-circle, are some of the famous founders and fathers of the church. On one side are Paul, Abraham, Moses, and Stephen. On the other are Peter, Adam, John, David, and St. Lawrence.

All of this great array look down upon a vast assemblage that has gathered about an altar upon which is the uplifted host. One of the most interesting figures in this group, if the identification is correct, is Savonarola, whose head is seen at the ex-

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RAPHAEL: STANZA DELLA SEGNATURA, GLORIFICATION OF THE FAITH

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treme right of the composition. This painting is only ten years after the execution of Savonarola as a heretic, and here he figures in the Vatican among the possessions of the pope. The laurel-wreathed head of Dante is very close and suggests the synthesis of secularism and Christianity that was going on at this time.

An interesting point in technique is the fact that Raphael has opened up the wall, widened out the scene and deepened to correspond to the circle of the lunette. It is a real question whether it is correct decoration to paint away the wall, or rather, to leave it out of consideration, as Raphael has done; but Michelangelo did the same thing in the Sistine Chapel, and other Renaissance artists decorated walls after the same manner. In our own time, the artist has felt more definitely than they, that the fundamental idea of decoration is subordination; that the best decoration interferes least with the feeling of solidity in the wall. When Puvis de Chavannes painted landscapes on his walls, he did them in flat tones and conventional forms that there might be just enough illusion of depth to carry his painting, without allowing us for a moment to forget the flatness and solidity of the wall.

It is probable that this picture was the first that Raphael did in working out his decoration of the Stanza della Segnatura. It is certainly, by all odds, the most beautiful as a decorative study.

The north section of the room was used to carry the three parts of his symbolism for poetry. The figure of Poetry on the ceiling is accompanied by a



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picture portraying the contest of Apollo and Marsyas. On the side wall is Mt. Parnassus, in which Apollo and the Nine Muses are the central figures, with the poets of Greece and Italy filling out the irregular space of the lunettè. Among these figures of the old poets, easily the most prominent on the left is the



RAPHAEL: STANZA DELLA SEGNATURA, APOLLO AND THE MUSES

Nestor of them all, old Homer, in full view and towering above the laureled head of the foremost Italian poet, Dante, whose profile stands out distinct against the sky. In the alcove at the left is the beautiful form of Sappho, charmed into a fine line study that adapts itself most harmoniously to its space.

The central part of the composition is a group of beautiful maidens that are gathered about, and

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listening to, Apollo who is playing on the viola. Why Raphael broke with tradition is instructive to us as suggesting something of his state of mind and point



RAPHAEL: STANZA DELLA SEGNATURA, APOLLO AND THE MUSES, DETAIL

of view. You remember that Apollo invented the pipes; but because they made him puff out his cheeks in blowing them, he discarded them, and invented the lyre whose playing did not interfere with the beauty of his face. If Raphael had used the lyre, he would

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have been expressing a truth about Apollo, but would have had little opportunity to display the subtle curves of the human hand and wrist which are emphasized as Apollo handles the bow. It is clear that Raphael is no uncompromising lover of truth, but is willing to subordinate it to his love for rhythmic curves and decorative quality.

In the representation of Apollo, the artist had a grand opportunity for the portrayal of exalted emotion. Here is the supreme poet; he is surrounded by the inspirers of all poetry; he has as audience the poets of the ages. But in the gentle curve of his wrist, and his upturned face, we get neither the soft strain that melts the heart, nor the fortissimo that carries us away with its passion. Here is the beautiful decorative line and serene beauty of the Madonnas.

On the east wall and corresponding ceiling, the dominant idea is Philosophy. The large composition on the side wall is called the School of Athens. The background of the picture is suggestive of the interior of St. Peter's, for there is a high, vaulted ceiling and an opening that is plainly surmounted by a dome. In the foreground is gathered an assembly of scholars whose central figures are Plato and Aristotle, the great leaders of Greek Philosophy. To the left is a young dandy who is usually called Alcibiades. In the foreground, at the left, is the figure of Pythagoras; on the steps in the center, the sprawling, cynical form of Diogenes; at the right, Archimedes, Ptolemy, and Zoroaster. At the very edge of the picture is the portrait of Raphael himself, looking out at the



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spectator. The whole is a fine illustration for the domain of philosophy.

The fourth side is the glorification of the state, or justice. The ceiling painting that accompanies



RAPHAEL: STANZA DELLA SEGNATURA, SCHOOL OF ATHENS

the symbolic figure is one of the best in the series. It is the Judgment of Solomon. It has fitting action, and feeling without exaggeration, unless one excepts the knotted muscles of the executioner. Michelangelo was working only a few feet away in the Sistine Chapel, and his influence is very plain in this figure.

Over the window of the side wall are three figures that represent fundamental ideas in the administra-

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tion of justice—Prudence, Force, and Moderation. The figure on the right carries a set of reins by which power is held in control. The next figure has the double face and look of prudence. The last woman,



RAPHAEL: STANZA DELLA SEGNATURA, JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON

by her power, bends a tree so low that its fruit may be plucked by a cherub.

The room which has now been studied in its four parts is a complete unity. An immense amount of

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study on the part of some one was required to make the decorations a unit in thought. A largeness of artistic conception was required in inventing fitting figures and holding the color harmony. But after all, our appreciation of this room is intellectual. The symbolism is so involved, the beauty is so abstract, the point of view is so completely suited to a particular time that while we must admire, the soul is not stirred as it is in some of the less pretentious works of Raphael.

With his generation, and in papal circles, the success of Raphael in the Stanza della Segnatura was complete. He was asked to continue his work in other stanze, but in none of these was he allowed to have an entirely free hand. In some of them his work is comparatively weak, in others he attained a remarkable success. His *Miracle of Bolsena*, for fine color, is hardly surpassed in all the annals of Italian fresco. His task was to portray for Julius II an event which was said to have happened many years before at the town of Bolsena. A young priest had doubted the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and tradition had it that one day when he was celebrating mass, the host actually bled. This story was particularly valuable for the days of Julius when the belief in the miraculous was no doubt a vanishing quantity. To satisfy the pride of Julius, he is made the chief spectator in this miracle.

The windows in this composition offered a vexing problem, for they were not in the middle. You will observe that the space at either side is filled in very different ways. Beneath the pope, on the right side,



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are his chair bearers, brilliantly robed and forming a fairly compact group, which we contemplate at our leisure. At the left where the space is narrower, there is a group of people seated, but you will observe that the eye does not dwell upon them; indeed, cannot;



RAPHAEL: MIRACLE OF BOLSENA

for the figure that rises out of this constricted space carries the eye with it. The mind is not disturbed by lack of balance. Balance was the quality he could not well have, and he therefore skillfully directs our attention elsewhere.

One other of his pictures deserves mention for its splendid study of light effects, the *Delivery of Peter from Prison*. The light of the moon is over all, while

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the torch of the Roman soldiers casts local shadows. In another part of the composition, the glory of the angel becomes the light.

Sometime after 1512, Raphael was asked to design cartoons for the tapestries that were planned to cover the lower part of the walls of the Sistine Chapel, and complete the scheme of decoration. One of these cartoons is the *Miraculous Draught of Fishes*. The two disciples that are tugging at the net no doubt get their muscles and their pose from the Titan-like figures of Angelo in the ceiling above. The motive force of the whole composition was of course Jesus, but he sits quite at one side and is partly out of the picture. All that Raphael has painted is the physical truth of straining muscles and gaping birds, while he misses entirely the fine spiritual significance.

The two men who directed the career of Raphael during his great years were Julius II and Leo X. Both of their portraits he painted.

Of the two of Julius, one does not know which is the original. The Pitti portrait seems softer in lines and suggests a kinder character for Julius than the Uffizzi version. Julius II may well be called the "warrior pope", for his reign was troublous, and he proved himself a mighty man. He also proved himself an aggressive patron of the arts. To him we are indebted for St. Peter's, for the greatest of Michelangelo's work, and the mural paintings of Raphael in the *della Segnatura*.

Leo X was a lover of all the fine arts as well as a patron, tho his face suggests that the most severe

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forms would hardly appeal to him. To Luther, he seemed voluptuous. He is attended in this picture by Rossi on the right, and by him that afterward



RAPHAEL: JULIUS II

became Clement VII, on the left. It was Leo who so far failed to appreciate Raphael at his real worth as to assign him the uncongenial task of superintending the erection of St. Peter's and the excavation of the Roman Forum.



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

The last work of Raphael was the Transfiguration, which remained unfinished at his death. It has gained an adventitious popularity by this fact, and



RAPHAEL: LEO X

also by being carried in the funeral procession of this beloved artist. Until comparatively recent times, this picture was considered Raphael's masterpiece. How this could ever have happened, it is difficult to understand.

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The picture is composed of two parts, the Transfiguration proper, and the events that took place while Jesus was absent from the disciples. These



RAPHAEL: THE TRANSFIGURATION

two parts have very little to unify them except the scripture narrative and their propinquity in the same frame. Further, note that we are looking *down* on the Mount, and are made very familiar with it, whereas the incident demands height and mystery.

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Now examine the face of Jesus, and see whether, in it, Raphael has caught the high exaltation of that supreme moment when Jesus catches a vision of another world. Has Raphael done any better here than he did in his Apollo of the Stanza? In the group below, we have a scene that we would fain leave out of art. The boy possessed of a devil, or in an epileptic fit, is no more appropriate to art than are the dying struggles of a Laocoön done by a degenerate age. If this were not an illustration of a scripture narrative, and had not the honor of the name of Raphael, it is a question whether it would not go the way of some other popular favorites of an earlier day.

Such magic has attached to the name of Raphael that he has been praised for qualities that he did not possess. Indeed, so unbounded has been the enthusiasm for him that it is dangerous to apply the critical test to any of his works. His admirers need not fear; what Raphael really was is great enough to place him among the greatest of them all.

He was a great assimilator. All great men have been indebted to various sources for the material out of which they have created their splendid works. Raphael borrowed from Perugino, and matured and beautified all that he borrowed. He borrowed from Bartolommeo, and gave life and flexibility to the new form of composition. He was not so happy in his borrowing from Michelangelo, for the *terribilità* of the latter found no counterpart in the nature of Raphael.

He was also a skillful composer, one of the great-



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est of all time. Before the days of Leonardo, good compositions came rather by chance; but his genius gathered together the stray lines and masses of the composition and evolved an orderly, articulated form that was a revelation to his contemporaries. Raphael brought line, light and dark, and color into a fuller harmony of composition probably than any before him, and set the standard for the moderns.

He was a great illustrator. He was able to enter sympathetically into the spirit of certain kinds of themes and adduce adequate figures and situations to illustrate them.

The greatest tribute that can be paid to Raphael is that he was the apostle of serene beauty. Whenever he attempted violent action or extreme emotion he was far from successful. So long as he confined himself to placid, sweet-tempered women, without profound experience, and usually without great vision, his creations were charming. For them to have a vision of a lost world, to feel the "sinfulness of sin," to carry a great weight of responsibility would make them sensitive to a tragedy for which they were not able, and in which they would find no hope. Raphael has shown us the beauty of serenity. It was not for him to enter deeply into human experience and portray either passionate power or the consuming flame of love. But he has brought comfort and sweetness and love to more people, perhaps, than any other artist that ever lived.

## CHAPTER XIII

### MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

**M**ICHELANGELO was fortunate in the time of his birth. Two centuries of vigorous striving had quite perfected for him the technique of painting and sculpture, and the Christian world had not yet fallen upon those evil days of indifference and worldliness that robbed the artist of a sense of reality in Christian themes. His time and temper gave him that rare combination of perfect craft and a profound interest in the ideals of the Christian world as they were then accepted.

One is reminded that the greatest man among the Greek artists was similarly fortunate in the time of his appearance. When Athens had become rich and great and before her religious fervor had ceased to burn, it was the good fortune of Phidias to build into the marble of the Parthenon the high ideals of his countrymen, and to glorify the finest and loftiest in the Greek religion in its marvelous pediments.

Michelangelo's life was a long one. He was born in 1475 and died in 1564, at the age of 89. He was a contemporary of Leonardo, Botticelli, Raphael, del Sarto, Giorgione, Correggio, and outlived them all. Even Titian survived him but a few years. Whatever other great names there are, are those of the pioneers like Giotto and Masaccio, or are the precursors of the decadence, like Veronese and Tinto-

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

retto. He saw the beginning of the great period of Florentine painting and lived far into the age of weak followers and imitators.

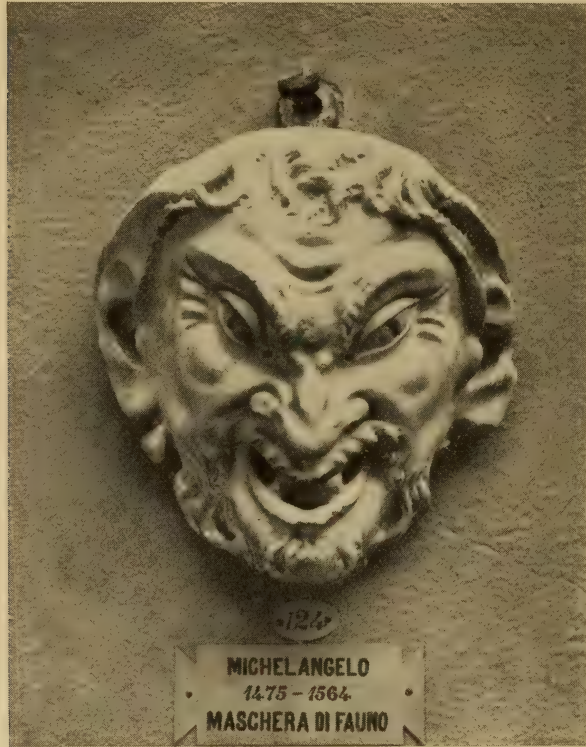
He was the son of Ludovico Buonarotti a stone mason who, at the time of the boy's birth, was podesta of Caprese. At school, he was not noted for his studious habits, but for the fact that he spent much time in drawing on the margins of his books. This no doubt was an important factor in determining the father to take the boy from school at the age of thirteen and to enroll him in the bottega of Ghirlandajo as assistant at a small salary. Note that he was an assistant, not a regular apprentice who started at the bottom and paid for his instruction all the way.

While in the workshop of Ghirlandajo, he formed a friendship with a fellow-student by the name of Granacci. The latter was very much interested in studying directly from the antique and therefore resorted to the collection which the purse and interest of the Medici had gathered in the gardens of the monastery of San Marco. Michelangelo went with him, and set to work at copying the face of an old satyr. The story goes that one day the young Lorenzo passed that way and remarked that an old satyr would have lost many of his teeth, which apparently the boy had failed to realize. The next time Lorenzo came, he found that the boy had profited by his criticism; the satyr had lost most of his teeth. The wise patron at once became interested, and asked the father's permission to take the youth into his own household.



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

In the palace of the Medici, Michelangelo had the opportunity of meeting the greatest and most learned men of the time. One of the most cultured



MICHELANGELO: HEAD OF SATYR

of these was Poliziano, who, it is said, suggested to Michelangelo the famous classical subject of the Lapiths and Centaurs as the theme for an original work. The result was so original and satisfactory that Michelangelo never disposed of the sculpture,

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

and today it may be seen in the house of the Buonarrotti in Florence. The sculptor depended on no accessories of landscape or of architecture. He dealt



MICHELANGELO: LAPITHS AND CENTAURS

directly with the nude figure in various poses and actions. The subject demanded crowded action with the result that but one figure is seen in full length. This figure at the left in the foreground has such rhythmic swing and is so full of life that it might well be the envy of a sculptor of much wider experience.

This first success was followed by a delicate low

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

relief called the Madonna della Scala. It suggests that Michelangelo has been studying the very perfect technique of the so-called "tomb makers" whose



MICHELANGELO: MADONNA DELLA SCALA

work has been noted in a previous chapter. At all events, he rivals them in the dainty beauty of his effects, while at the same time he makes a splendid beginning in the interpretation of the Christian themes that later were to occupy him so profoundly.



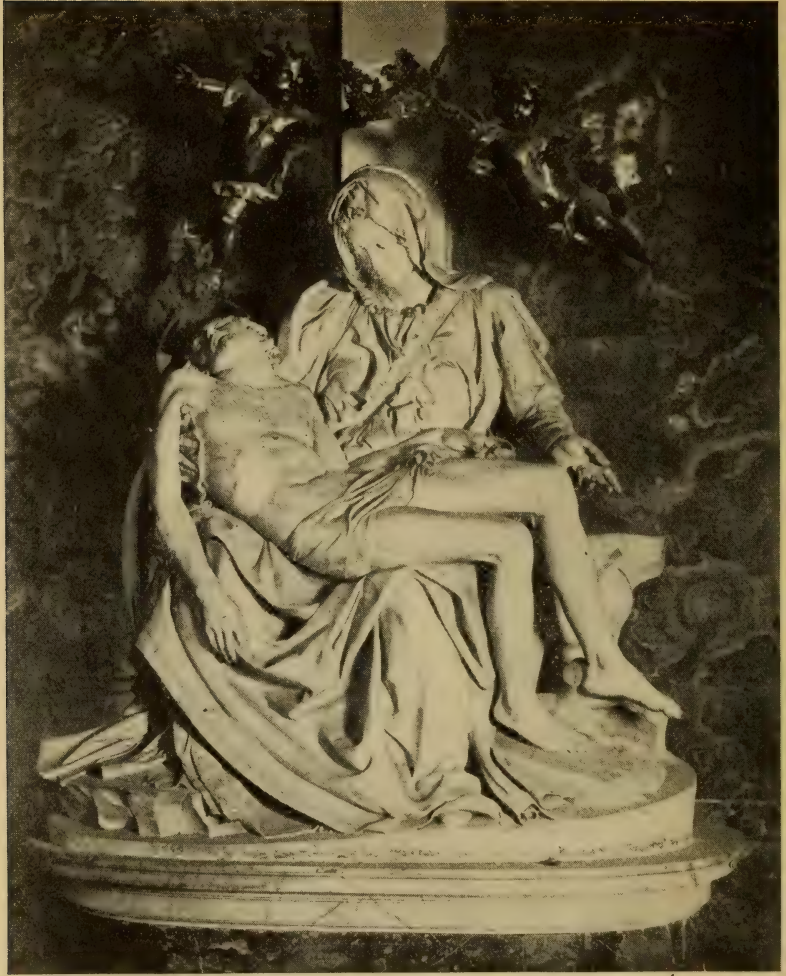
## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

These two works, one classical and the other Christian, done before he was eighteen, show much of the genius of the great artist, even tho it had not yet been ripened by struggle and adversity. But the adversity was just ahead.

After two years or more in this most happy environment, Michelangelo lost his patron Lorenzo, and worse, became an exile from Florence; for Piero de' Medici who succeeded Lorenzo became unpopular and, with all his friends, was driven from the city. After varied experiences, which need not be recounted here, Michelangelo is found in Rome about the year 1497. He was at work on a *Pieta* which we find today in the great church of St. Peter. The dead body of her son lies in Mary's lap, his head supported by her right arm, while her left is lifted in a very significant gesture. Mary's dress is spread out and made sculpturally strong that the composition may build up into a pyramidal mass to suggest solidity of character and restraint in action and feeling. The small head is the first of those which Michelangelo used as a convention to intensify character effects. The dead body is finely modeled; it is most flexible and suggests that life is just extinct. It is no lay figure, having form that never had life; it is soft flesh that a moment ago could act and feel.

No doubt the death of Savonarola had great effect upon Michelangelo's treatment of this and later themes. No one can study the life and art of this artist without feeling his religious temper. His sonnets, his letters, and his works all show it. Before the burning of Savonarola in 1498, we have

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MICHELANGELO: PIETÀ, ST. PETER'S

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Lapiths and Centaurs, Cupids, a drunken Bacchus; after this, high and mighty thoughts that continuously and seriously labor to find form in paint and stone. The pathos of the living supporting the dead; the pathos of the mother resigning herself to the death of her son and revealing her soul by her uplifted hand brings sharply to mind in no formal way the great sacrifice of Savonarola and the great tragedy of the Christian faith. With his beautiful success in his *Pietà*, Michelangelo becomes a mature genius and the great interpreter of Christianity in art. The days of his manhood are at hand.

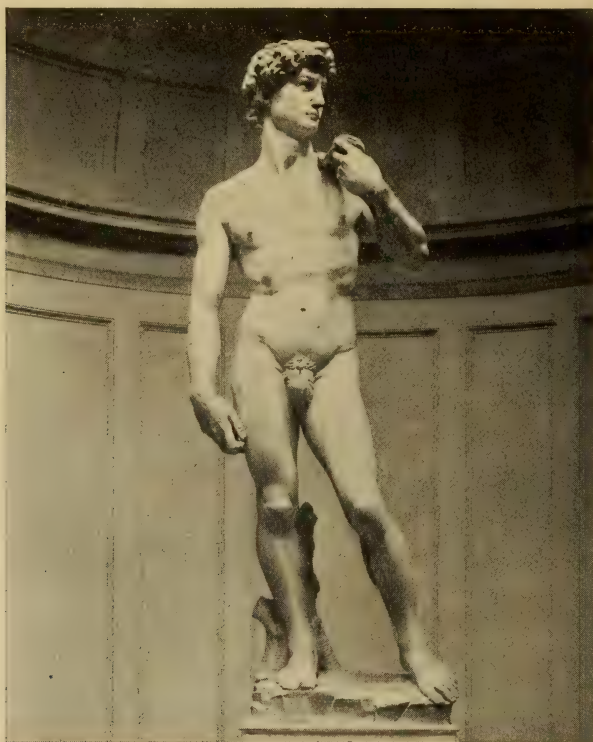
The council at Florence had long been disturbed by the presence in the city square of a huge block of marble that had been spoiled by the hand of an unskillful sculptor. It was decided to ask Michelangelo to transform this unsightly block into a statue of David. With this commission in 1501, the artist returned to his home city to begin the period of his greatest work.

It is the custom of sculptors to make a statue, either in wax or clay, which is then turned over to craftsmen to carve in marble or mold in bronze. Michelangelo made no life size model. He seems to have put his first ideas into a little wax figure, perhaps eighteen inches high, which has neither the proportions of the finished David nor any of its grandeur of conception. He then started to chisel his David from the ruins of another man's work. So clearly did he see the finished statue in the mass, so accurate was his power of visualization, so perfectly did he see the limits of the block, that there still re-



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

main on the head of the David some of the marks of the first sculptor. He used every fraction of his material. He saw a statue in the stone, and all he had to do was to release it from its encasing chips.



MICHELANGELO: DAVID

The figure may annoy one at first glance. The body is somewhat awkward, for it is the body of an undeveloped youth. The hands are perhaps too large; the neck may be too heavy; but out of this awkward-

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

ness grows a very definite impression of strength. David is no youth who has lived in the woman's quarter of his home in Palestine; he is able to tear asunder the jaws of the mountain lion. His body is



MICHELANGELO: DAVID, DETAIL

every inch a mass of sinewy muscle and sustaining bone.

Whatever may be the faults of the body, the face is a splendid realization. Here is a David who has beautified his soul with the simple music that he played to his sheep; who has made his eye keen with watchfulness against danger, and soft with the colors

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

in the flowers and on the hills; who has slept beneath the stars and grown calm in their eternity. His face is the revelation of a soul in which the tide of life is at the full.

Now this hero comes up to the great crisis. Kept away from battle because of his youth and a mother's love, he now goes down to the camp to inquire about the welfare of his brothers. He finds them well in body, but cowed in spirit. From the humblest to the highest, the Israelites are shamefaced because they fear the mighty giant of the Philistines. You know the story, how the youth met the challenge, how the king offered his own armor, and how David finally decided to fight with the simple weapons which he knew best. The moment has come when he faces his great adversary with a smooth stone ready in the sling. You must not fail to note the tense muscles of his neck, the curling lines of his nostrils, and the keen focus of his eye. He is a splendid combination of high courage and healthy fear. He hates his enemy but he does not underrate his prowess.

The sculptor has but one moment for his action; he can not show progress; but he must suggest it. The moment is accidental; but out of the fleeting and accidental, great art reveals and must ever reveal that which abides, the Universal. The fleeting moment must sum up the past and prophesy the future. How wonderfully Michelangelo does this in this statue! He has gathered up all the boy's preparation among the hills, and all the scorn of a favored people for the barbarian that worshipped not their God, and has burdened the moment with



## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

the future of David's family and the life of his nation. He has made us feel that the next moment the stone shall smite the giant's skull, the air will be rent with hallelujahs, and the youth will start on the high road to the throne of a king.

When the statue was finally finished a great assembly of artists was called at the studio for a first view and to decide on the location. There were San Gallo, Perugino, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, and others. The wish of Michelangelo was followed, that the statue be placed near the entrance of the Palazzo Vecchio where the Judith of Donatello then stood. Here it remained from 1504 until a few years ago when it was removed to one of the museums, as the marble was showing the effect of exposure to the weather.

Tho busy on other commissions, Michelangelo entered at this time into a so-called competition with Leonardo in the decoration of the Hall of the Grand Council. Leonardo who had returned from Milan rich in reputation, was given the commission to paint one of the long walls of the Hall, and it was to be expected that, on completion of this, the second would be assigned to him as the foremost painter of Florence; but without waiting for the first to be finished, Soderini assigned the second to Michelangelo, who naturally was looked upon as the young rival of the older painter. Leonardo finished his design and placed it on the wall, but experimenting as usual, he saw his oils sink and his picture flake and fade. Angelo's work stopped with his cartoon, and that is preserved only in copies.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

The subject was a surprise attack upon some Florentine soldiers while they were bathing. Some are almost dressed, others are yet climbing out of the water. The cartoon became famous for its power in representation of passionate action.

While Michelangelo was still at work upon this vigorous cartoon, the great call of his life came from



MICHELANGELO: SOLDIERS SURPRISED WHILE BATHING

Julius II to return to Rome. Julius reigned as pope from 1503 to 1513 and is noteworthy as gathering about him a large number of artists who were to add to his glory as a warrior, statesman, and patron of the arts. Both San Gallo and Bramante, prominent architects of their time, were invited to Rome, and builded for the pope. Michelangelo was called, and later Raphael. Julius was a man of large ideas, and tho an old man when called to the papacy, he planned and acted as if he were a man

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

of middle life. To Michelangelo he assigned the duty of building for him a memorial mausoleum which was to be erected in some part of St. Peter's. After looking over the old building which had been built more or less piecemeal, and for which a new tribune had been projected by Nicholas V, Michelangelo decided that the best place for the mausoleum was in this tribune which had hardly risen above its foundations, and had lain in neglect since the time of Nicholas. This decision paved the way for the erection of a new St. Peter's, tho its completion was long after the days of Julius II.

Michelangelo entered with zest into the building of this mighty mausoleum. In 1505, he set out for an eight months' stay at the marble quarries of Carrara. Great blocks were transported to the banks of the Tiber as a result of this first visit, but they were not enough to satisfy the imagination of the ambitious artist. Again he went to Carrara, bringing with him more and huger blocks. The marble was ready at last, the marble cutters from Florence were at hand, but the money from the pope suddenly ceased. After repeated delays, Michelangelo determined to clear up the matter by a personal interview with the pope himself. At the door of the Vatican he was informed that the pope had given express orders not to admit him. Perhaps personal enemies had been busy; perhaps some one had played on the superstitions of the pope, saying that it was a bad omen to prepare one's own tomb. Whatever the reason that influenced the mind of the pope, Michelangelo knew at once what *he* intended to do.



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Writing a short note to the pope, and ordering a servant to sell all his possessions, he mounted a horse and hurried away to Florentine territory. Messengers were sent in pursuit; the Florentine state was ordered to send him back; but he would not go until he had the personal promise of the pope that he would not be harmed. Meanwhile, war took Julius to Bologna, and there Michelangelo met him and was pardoned.

His stay in Bologna lasted two years, for Julius directed him to cast a bronze statue of himself to stand in front of St. Petronio; but the resulting work was ill-fated since the enemies of Julius soon occupied Bologna, and recast the bronze into cannon to be used against the pope.

By 1508 Michelangelo was back in Rome ready to continue his work upon the mausoleum, but Julius in no way could be persuaded to continue the work, and it was never finished. Indeed, such is the irony of fate and such the feeble end of many an ambition, that we are not quite sure where the body of Julius lies buried. For Michelangelo, the death of Julius only increased his annoyances regarding the tomb. The new popes wanted his time for their plans, the heirs of Julius wanted him to fulfill his promises to the old. He was an old man before a final adjustment was reached. The plans for the tomb had become the "tragedy of the tomb."

So far as may be determined from the extant drawings, the design was to consist of three parts, rising one above the other to a height of thirty feet on a pedestal twenty-four by thirty-six feet. The

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

lower part was to be adorned with about forty figures and the finest architectural decorations; the second held the sarcophagus with large seated figures at the corners. The Bound Slaves which belonged to the lower parts, and the Moses of the second part are all that need special attention.

In the Moses, as in the David, there are some things that attract attention quite out of proportion to their importance and that should therefore be noted at the beginning to clear the way for appreciation. In the first place, the head is rather small for the massive body. Then you will note that the head bears a pair of horns, which is according to the account in the eighth chapter of Exodus. Last, the drapery over the knees annoys. Perhaps this was done for love of flesh and bone, or it may be meant to intensify feeling or the imminent action. One wonders why.

You remember that it was Moses who dared oppose the great Pharaoh, that led the slaves out across the Red Sea, that provided for their wants, endured their complainings, and developed in them the functions of government. At last he brought them to Sinai where he formulated for them the primal religious code that we call the Ten Commandments. It had all been a long, arduous task with gradual progress and many bitter disappointments. Moses was the great leader of a great race at the most critical time in its history.

The moment that Michelangelo has chosen for his monumental work is that in which Moses carries his crowning work in his hands. Up there on the

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



MICHELANGELO: MOSES



## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

heights, amid thunderings and lightnings, he has graven on stone the ten fundamentals that have been the guiding star of great peoples from that time to this. He carries the decalogue, the first principle of which is that no graven image shall be made to represent the divinity. In that supreme moment, with his heart full and his hopes high, he looks out from the mount upon the camp where he sees his people bow down in supplication to a Golden Calf.

It is a moment of intense emotion. The brow of Moses is drawn. His heart works hard, pumping the blood to the puffed and livid face. The hand toys with the long beard as a tiger lashes its tail before the spring. The left foot is drawn back. Furious indignation has driven out the fullness of the divine. The next moment he will leap to his feet and dash the tables of stone upon the rocks.

Michelangelo has a grand conception of Moses, supreme in its vitality, overpowering in its effect. In all the domain of Christian art, there is no figure to be compared with this in its power and majesty.

The Bound Slaves belonged to the figures on the lower part of the mausoleum and symbolized the arts and sciences, fettered by the death of Julius. As symbolic figures and companion pieces, they have a profound universal significance. They represent the different attitudes of humanity in bonds. You remember that beautiful passage from Carlyle: "Thus encircled by the mystery of existence; under the deep heavenly firmament; waited on by the four golden seasons did the child sit and learn. . . . Never-

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

theless I were but a vain dreamer to say that even then my felicity was perfect. . . . Among all the rainbow colors that glowed on my horizon lay even



MICHELANGELO: BOUND SLAVE

in childhood a dark ring of Care. . . . It was the ring of Necessity, whereby we are all begirt; happy he for whom a kind heavenly Sun brightens it into a ring of Duty and plays round it with beautiful prismatic diffractions; yet ever, as basis and as bourne

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

for our whole being it is there." The Ring of Necessity is personal and real. The bonds are as inevitable as life,—our limits of health and strength, our ability to think and feel, our temperament, and all those many possessions which we recognize as desirable but impossible for us mayhap. We are one talent people; we cannot be five.

These two Bound Slaves symbolize humanity in the bonds of Necessity. One is a Rebel by nature. He struggles; he knots his muscles; he contorts his face; he writhes and tortures his body and soul; and all to no purpose. The bonds are there as strong as ever. The other may have struggled, but he has realized how vain his efforts were. Resignation and peace have beautified his face, calmed his muscles into delicate contours, and developed a rhythmic line in his



MICHELANGELO: BOUND SLAVE



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

pose. The one has all the bluster and wildness of a March storm; the other the restfulness of a September day when nature is golden and the haze is on the hills.

In describing the figures for the tomb of Julius, we have anticipated somewhat the sequence of events. When the pope finally decided in 1508 to give up the mausoleum, he asked Michelangelo to paint the figures of the twelve apostles for the Sistine Chapel. Now the Sistine Chapel is the private chapel of the popes. Here the cardinals assemble at the death of a pope to elect his successor. Here the anniversaries of his coronation are observed with great pomp and rejoicing. The chapel was built for Sixtus IV who reigned from 1472 to 1481, and was one of the projects by which the popes brought back glory to Rome after its decline during the papal exile at Avignon. The walls of the chapel had been decorated with six scenes on one side from the life of Christ and six on the other from the life of Moses. And now Julius decided that he wished the walls decorated with the figures of the twelve apostles. In vain Angelo protested that he was no painter. The old pope insisted and must not be disobeyed. Then the artist told him that he would attempt the work if he could make his own design; that a design containing only the figures of the twelve apostles would be poor indeed. Julius had insight enough to know his man, and told Angelo to do as he pleased. In a very little time the mighty imagination of the artist had evolved a design that covered the entire ceiling and upper

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

wall, 10,000 square feet of space, contained more than 300 figures, more than 200 of them important, and some of colossal proportions.



MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, INTERIOR

This was but the beginning of the difficulties attending this stupendous work. Cartoons had to be made for each individual part of the painting and as large as the finished work itself. A scaffolding

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

was built for Michelangelo, suspended from ropes that passed through holes in the ceiling. When he saw it he asked how he was to fill the holes after the painting was done. There was no answer. Taking advantage of the fact that there were six windows on each side, he devised a scaffold that neither interfered with the work on the ceiling nor deprived the pope of the use of the chapel while the painting was going on. Now came the application of the fresco to the enormous space. Lying upon his back or in some cramped position, he had to put on the plaster, and then apply the color to this, finishing the work before the mortar dried. If any mistake had been made, all the plaster had to be removed, and the process repeated, for the color could not well be applied to dry plaster. He tried to find capable assistants, but he found none, not even from his beloved Florence. Almost unaided, except for his color grinder, he toiled away in this cramped position for four long years, until the crooked form and stooping shoulder were almost the normal for him. While we enjoy the magnificent result of that four years, let us remember the heroic physical endeavor that made it possible.

On entering this long, narrow, lofty room, 133 x 43 x 68, the first impression is one of somberness. In front of us is the high altar, with Angelo's picture of the Last Judgment hidden away in a blue fog that has deepened with the candle smoke of the centuries. On the side walls are the pictures painted for Sixtus by the great masters of 1480, which have faded into a low key. Above in the lunettes and on the ceiling are the tawny yellows, dull browns, and cool grays of the great fresco. Many paintings charm us at once by the magnificence of their color, but on this



## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

ceiling are no gorgeous sunsets, no morning splendors, nor flood of light at noontide; no background of gold nor glitter of jewels. It is all a somber harmony that hushes one's chatter and stills the merely sensuous love of the beautiful. We feel at once that the master appeals to something higher than the love of splendid color.

A gallery of figures begins to take form in the midst of an intricate architectural framework. With a little patience one catches the two dominant lines of painted cornice that run lengthwise of the ceiling and are crossed at right angles by many lines that rise from the windows on either side. From this crossing of lines, a series of frames is



MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, GENERAL VIEW OF CEILING

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

developed by the painter to hold and individualize his pictures. Down the middle there are nine panels alternately large and small. In these he has painted a part of the story of the early chapters of Genesis. As a sort of border to these central panels, we find a series of figures, significantly twelve, five on either side and one at each end. There are seven of the prophets, and five of the sibyls of the pagan world. Then in the triangular spaces where the ceiling curves down in the corners are four events from Old Testament history. Last of all are the spaces over the windows, partly on the side walls and partly on the ceiling, filled with figures from the lineage of David. It is very necessary to keep these parts in mind if one would understand the design and thought of Michelangelo.

The long central panel has nine divisions, five made smaller by the use of decorative figures at the corners, twenty figures in all that are used as pure decoration. While Angelo meditated on mighty thoughts of creator and man, he shows how much he loves the human figure as a thing of beauty in these twenty figures that have nothing to do with his story. They express the swiftest action; they sit in poetic poses; they form rhythmic lines; they are models of draughtsmanship; they are the creation of a care-free mind and a facile brush. They show us Michelangelo at play. So far and no farther some of our modern critics insist art should go, but he who was the master of them all, knew that his art was language and that he must not be satisfied to play at rhetoric.

The first scene in this long central panel is over

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

the high altar at the end. In it we are carried back to the beginning of Creation. The ceiling has been opened and a sky of untamed molecules and boding mystery meets our gaze. In the midst, like a great



MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, THE BEGINNING OF CREATION

spirit of the air, the Creator flashes upon our sight. From the Unknown he comes; into the Unknown he goes. His robe is caught in the whirl of volcanic air, but with perfect ease those arms part the primeval,



THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, CREATION OF SUN AND MOON

*MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI*

like an untired swimmer in a tempest of waters. Out of the vaporous deep of wild chaos appears the form of Him who speaks the Word that first began the reign of law—Let there be light.

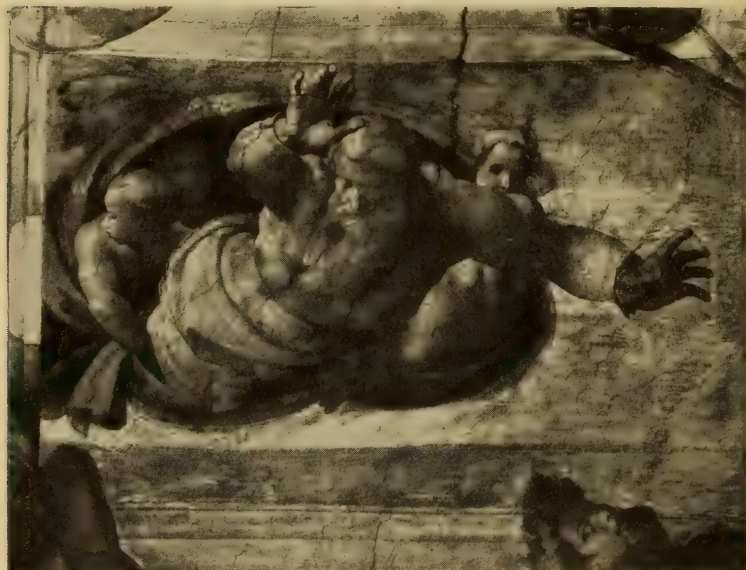


MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, CREATION OF SUN AND MOON,  
DETAIL

Creation advances in the next panel to the forming of the sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night. No longer hid in nebulous mist, but like some meteor coming out of the night, the Almighty sweeps

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

the sky in swift and resistless motion. Not a line, not a stroke that does not intensify this feeling of motion, as silent as the planets and as overwhelming as the sea. The figure flies but not on wings. He comes now in the company of cherubs, far different from the



MICHELANGELO: THE DIVINE BENEDICTION

figure that wrestled alone with chaos where the joy of victory was shared by no other. Cherubs here fly with the Almighty and are wonderstruck as He sends spinning away from His fiery touch the dazzling orb that rules the day and, with imperious will, appoints the moon to rule the night. Here is no toilsome struggle between order and chaos, but irresistible will and wild joy in power. Here is a figure mightier than the



## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

sun he sets ablaze, that delights in the crack and roar of the skies, and rides supreme upon the winds.

It is too bad that Angelo has marred this marvelous work with a second picture of the Almighty, who according to Condivi, is represented as creating the herbs and grasses.

In the third panel we see the mellow and benignant face of Him to whom a thousand years are but as yesterday. His hair and beard are patriarchal. His body floats easily and slowly upon the air. His look is downward and his hands are extended in benediction. The earth is good and is ready for its crown and lord, man. The first cycle of creation is ended.

The second cycle begins with the creation of man. Here Michelangelo is at his best. He to whom the human body is a thing divine, may here take upon himself the divine rôle and create anew man in the image of God. The old Greeks had loved the human body. To them the soul dwelt not alone in head and face, but shone in rippling muscle and well-formed limb. Perfect humanity was not wan with inner struggle nor pinched with fasts and vigils; perfect body was demanded as the home of the perfect soul. Angelo had the same passionate love for the body as had the Greeks. To him it was the clearest, divinest language the artist could use, and when he could speak thru it he disdained the language of clothes.

With Adam as his subject, he has given us one of the really wonderful figures in art. Here is no exaggeration of muscle nor ponderous form that thunders forth his message in other pictures, but a mature young man in the beauty of physical life.

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, CREATION OF MAN

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

Adam, the child of the ages, only as yet a perfect animal, has just awakened and risen on his elbow. He is like one who walks in strange woods by moonlight.



MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, CREATION OF MAN, DETAIL

Half dreaming, in beauteous physical languor, in innocent wonder, he opens his eyes upon a vision that arouses sensation without comprehension. The Creator comes like the wind and brings the breath of life. See the magnificent sweep of His mantle and the



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

shining grace of His form! He stretches forth His omnipotent hand and man becomes a living soul. How interested the little cherubs are in this strange creature that lies upon the mountain side! All of them look out from the cover of the mantle with eager gaze, while one, around whose shoulder rests the Omnipotent's arm, seems to take a very personal interest in the new creation. Did Michelangelo intend to portray the spirit of Eve in the arms of the Almighty? The Father's face is grave tho not unkind. He seems to feel the high responsibility He puts upon this man when He creates him in His own image with power to choose evil rather than the good.

But for better or for worse, man has been created and it is not good for him to be alone. A deep sleep falls upon Adam and from his side woman is created. Here is certainly a place for restraint in treatment, a theme to be spoiled by any but a master-hand. In the illustration Michelangelo has kept close to the narrative while maintaining a dignified restraint. Woman, mature in body, steps forth as if from behind the man and with most graceful reverence lifts her hands and face to him who deigns to leave the heights for her; and the Father, massive in form, no longer cuts the sky in fiery flights, but walks the earth He has made, with a dignity that is tinged with sadness.

Then it comes to Adam as it has come to all of us ever since; the temptation to eat the forbidden fruit and the loss of our Eden of childhood. Both of these incidents have been put into a double scene that certainly is not equal to the pictures that have preceded.

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

We do not see the power of temptation. Neither the man nor the woman seems to have any compunctions of conscience. The other half of the picture is far more effective. Discovery has been made and sentence passed. The angel of justice and the sword



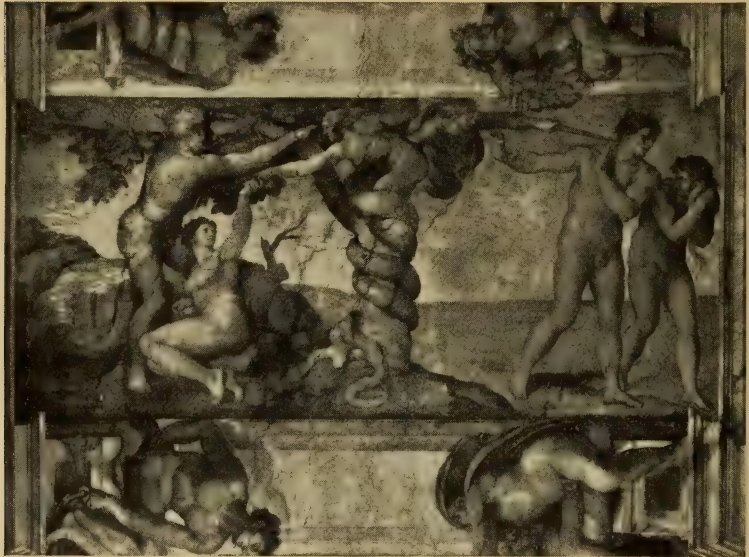
MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, CREATION OF WOMAN

of vengeance follow hot upon the pair as they pass from their Eden.

The mighty efforts of the Creator seem to have come to an impotent conclusion. Man that lay on the mountain side and gazed full on the awful face of the Almighty; woman, at whose creation the Divine deigned to walk the earth, now cower in terror before the angel of the Lord and the long story of man's sin and woman's shame begins. The All-

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

powerful struggled with chaos, subdued and organized it, and blessed it. The All-loving created man in his own image and gave him the world on which he had lavished infinite care. But man is a failure; ignorant and weak, he falls in his first strug-



MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, THE TEMPTATION AND EXPULSION

gle with life. He has not subdued the world but it has subdued him. He has gained knowledge, it is true, but the price is the loss of Eden, and the light he has is but the light of common day. In his darkened world he gropes and stumbles and falls deeper. No more does the sad face of the Father appear in the visions of Michelangelo, but he sends to man his only hope of redemption—calamity.



## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

For the sake of putting it in a large panel, Angelo has pictured this calamity in the eighth panel instead of in the seventh. Artistically this is one of the least satisfactory compositions on the ceiling, but we must remember that it was the first finished and



MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, THE DELUGE

the same fault was not committed the second time. The deluge covers the face of the earth. Already the water has filled the valleys, the wind blows fiercely and we can almost feel the pelting of the rain. In the foreground, men and women crowd the little hill in wild distress. Their backs are burdened with all they hold dear, and up the steep they toil to a place that only delays the evil hour. One hangs to

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

the tree that bends beneath the power of the wind. Some have launched a boat, but in that storm it is only a straw. Beyond is the ark, square, sturdy as a wall. Noah and his family are safe.

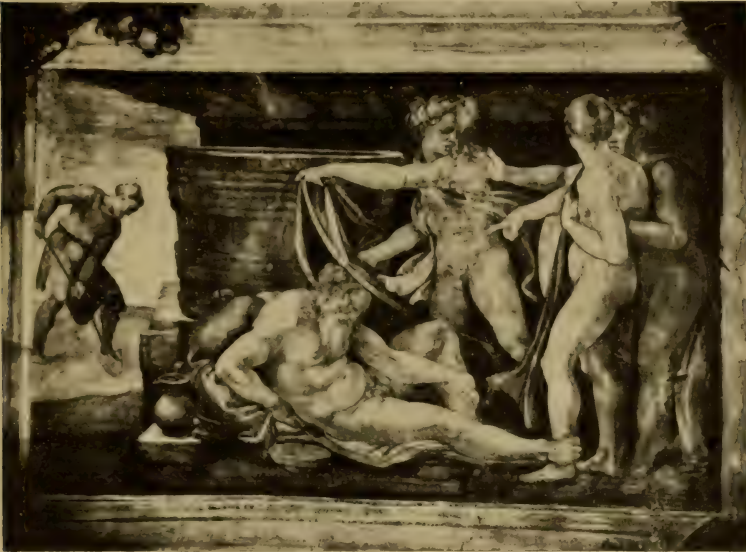
In the seventh panel, the tempest has passed, the waters have receded, the earth buds and the rainbow of promise arches the sky. In gratitude, all the family gather at the altar to offer up sacrifices of thanksgiving. A spirit of emulation in righteousness animates the group. Some of them have fine faces and Noah looks a righteous man. Thru him surely the race shall redeem itself from ignorance and sin.

But looks deceive and hoary beard does not make a god to know good and evil. In the last panel, Noah lies in the stupor of drunkenness and shame, as you may read in the ninth of Genesis. Two of his sons respect the old man's years and with averted heads cover his nakedness and shame; but Ham, a lower nature, does not blush. With brazen curiosity he points to man's second greater failure. Now there is no compensation. Man has climbed only to fall back; he has been tried and found wanting.

The long central panel of the ceiling is ended with its nine momentous scenes; and it ends in drunkenness, a failure to control and direct self. In the first three scenes, chaos is conquered, the sun and moon glow at the fiery touch, and the earth is blest as a fit habitation for man. The next three show man living but helpless; woman gracious and grateful; the temptation and the fall. The last three show us the cleansing thru the deluge, the beginning of a new life of righteousness, and the inglorious second failure.

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

If now you understand the vision of Michelangelo in this great central panel that ends in drunkenness, you will understand why he has put about it a great framework of stalwart prophets who heard the whispers of the Almighty saying "Lean not to thine own understanding. God is not mocked. Unto you



MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, THE DRUNKENNESS OF NOAH

a child is born; unto you a son is given." You will see why he added those prophets of the pagan world, the Sibyls of Greece and Rome and Africa, who saw the vision more dimly but eagerly searched their books to find when His star should appear. There are five Sibyls and seven Prophets which are such consummate works of art that they alone would be enough to establish the fame of Michelangelo.



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MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, THE CUMAEBAN SIBYL, DETAIL

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

The Cumæan Sibyl was she of the Roman Sibylline Books, books that were the highest authority in every crisis of Roman history. Her home was at Cumæ near the bay of Naples, only a short distance from the fabled entrance to the lower world thru Lake Avernus. Every line of the artist's brush builds for us the impression of strength. Her form is masculine, with mighty arms and frame. The head is small in proportion to the body, as we find in almost all the master's works. Yet the struggle of life has bowed her shoulders and left lines of care in her face. She is weary with brooding over deferred hope, but the little angels have come with words she has longed to hear; and now with parted lips, doubting and anxious, she opens her book to find the angel message true. Does her masculinity trouble you? She is the spirit of old Rome. She is the Rome of the Coliseum, of the mighty aqueducts, the Rome that built roads for the centuries, that developed a Julius Caesar and subjected the world to law. Who but such a figure could represent an empire that reigned thru the centuries?

When we look upon the Delphic Sibyl, it is youth and innocence and wonder that move us rather than strength. Look at those great eyes of astonishment and the right arm that rests nerveless upon her knee! Even the little attendants in the background can hardly believe what they read.

The Sibyl, the youngest of them all, does not shout for joy at good news; she was hardly anticipating the message that has come to her. It is a mingled feeling of gladness and disappointment that shows in her

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MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, THE DELPHIC SIBYL, DETAIL



## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

attitude and face. Now remember who it is that Angelo is attempting to portray. The Delphic oracle was the most famous of all Greece. For hundreds of years, men came from far and near to listen to the words of wisdom uttered at this noblest shrine of the ancient world. Here was the center of the religious life of Greece, and the personification of that life was the Delphic Sibyl. It is the youthful enthusiasm and self-contained pride of Greece as well as her love of truth and hope of the future that shine out in this figure, one of the most beautiful Angelo ever created.

Yet her physical beauty is far surpassed by the figure of the Libyan Sibyl. Quivering muscles ripple on her shoulders, and fullness of life tingles and thrills beneath the drapery. She has strength to lift the heavy book and to do it airily. Her face is genteel and distinguished, tho not pretty. She is superb in her womanliness tho not conscious of her woman's power to charm. She has a dash of masculinity tho it is obvious only in her dignity and confidence in herself. She is in sharp contrast with the women of Raphael. As it has already been noted, Raphael's women are so feminine that it is difficult to think of them as courageously bearing the burdens of life. The Libyan Sibyl is a woman as pure as the Madonna of the Goldfinch, as far-seeing as the Sistine, and the most beautiful that Michelangelo dreamed on canvas or in stone.

Omitting the Persian and Erythrean Sibyls as less important, we may turn now to the other seven figures of the framework about the central panel, the Prophets.

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MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, THE LIBYAN SIBYL

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Jonah, who is at the end of the ceiling over the high altar, is in one respect the most striking figure in the whole composition. The part of the ceiling on which



MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, JONAH

he is painted curves forward from the perpendicular at an angle of forty-five degrees. But Jonah is painted with such consummate skill in foreshortening that he seems to lean back as much as the ceiling would make him lean towards us. The foreshorten-



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

ing is needed to express his helpless surprise and amazement that salvation is actually coming to the Ninevites whom he has condemned for their sins.



MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, DANIEL

Daniel is an expression by means of line and form of what we feel in the rhythm of a poem or the swing of a waltz. Follow the line from the left foot thru the knee to the massive trunk and on to the shoulder, the neck, the head, ending in the direction of the hair. What a fine curve it makes! The whole body

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

rocks and sways like a great boulder atilt on the mountain side. Now note the cherub. Always these little creatures have places and attitudes that suit the main figure. This one in trustful assurance holds up the massive book from which Daniel copies. And the prophet with hair thrown back and careless left arm that suggests perfect poise of soul, eagerly writes: "In the night I saw visions, and behold one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of Days. And there was given to him dominion and glory and a kingdom. His dominion is an everlasting dominion and his Kingdom shall not be destroyed."

From the strong assurance of Daniel to the impulsive mood of Ezekiel is a great change. He bursts upon us like the sound of a mighty wind or the rushing of many waters. He is the captive who longs for the message that will set him free, but, disappointed many times, doubts the very thing he would believe. Ezekiel has been sitting a captive by the waters of Chedar; his head is weary and his heart faint, and murmuring "How long, O, how long?" When the words of hope do come, with impulsive astonishment he says "Is it true? Can it be?" In another moment he will obey the words he so many times utters in his prophecy and stand upon his feet.

That other great prophet of the captivity, Jeremiah, displays no impulsiveness and sees no ray of hope. He is of heroic build. Should he stand he would be a veritable giant, eighteen feet in height. He is a Hercules or Titan, and comes from the age of the mastodon and the mighty glaciers. No innocent

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MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, JEREMIAH



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cherub children accompany him. These attendants are mature in years and have lost the song of rejoicing. Hear them wail in the 137th Psalm: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps on the willow tree, for they that carried us away captive required of us a song. But how shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" And Jeremiah wails with them. Sorrow has brought low his gigantic form. One hand hangs listless; even the fingers are parted in utter helplessness. The other hand supports the bowed head and is partly buried in the patriarchal beard. Tears are almost forced from the hollow eyes. This is not a father's grief nor a strong man's humiliation. It is the crushing shame of a religious patriot who sees the captivity of his country and religion, and groans in his wretchedness: "When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint within me. The harvest is past; the summer is ended and we are not saved. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? O that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." Jeremiah cannot see thru his tears. Michelangelo painted him in deepest gloom to die in a foreign land.

With a forward look and a truer vision, Isaiah faces the captivity and sees beyond it the coming day. He is not massive like Jeremiah, nor is he overborne with grief, but his face wears the smile of the earth on a May afternoon beneath the flitting clouds and steadfast sun. He has been reading and as he muses

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MICHELANGELO: SISTINE CHAPEL, ISAIAH

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

in confident calm the eager angel sings as he points away into the future: "Awake, awake. Put on thy strength, O Zion. Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, for the Lord has comforted his people." And Isaiah lifts his face, with no surprised smile like some of the other prophets, nor with the impetuous gesture of Ezekiel, as he chants in answering refrain: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." And he faces the world with the message: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. The Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him. He shall feed his flock and gather the lambs in his arms."

The prophets and sibyls sustain the central panel of temptation and failure, with hopes and promises of help from the "power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." Then the great artist calls upon history to show that deliverance is a fact; that the strong arm of Jehovah has been underneath his people in many a crisis of their national life. He puts into the four irregular corners that are a sort of support for the ceiling, four heroic deeds of deliverance in Jewish history.

In one, Esther delivers her people from the plots of Haman thru her abiding trust and willingness to sacrifice herself. In another, Judith takes her life in her hands, and delivers her people from the enemy by slaying Holofernes, the hostile general, in his own tent. A third corner shows us the deliverance of the Israelites from the Philistines, the familiar story of David and Goliath. The incident is stripped of all



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

accessories that might heighten its grandeur. The giant lies stunned while David lifts his sword to strike off the head. The fourth corner shows the Brazen Serpent lifted up in the wilderness. The people are writhing in the coils of the serpents, but their deliverance is at hand.



MICHELANGELO: DAVID AND GOLIATH

In between these four cornerstones of historic help, in the lunettes and arches over the windows, Michelangelo has painted the ancestors of the Christ. They are humble people that know not the glitter of gold nor the purple of position. As examples of pure painting they are of little importance, but they are of tremendous significance in the message of help and redemption that filled the mind and heart of Angelo

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

as he labored there four weary years. They point forward to the coming of the Messiah. They make sure that, tho Adam may disobey and Noah may sink to his lower self, under the inspiration of The Great Life humanity shall yet rise into the high purpose of God, and become a self-director and Creator.

Never did any work of art, in literature, sculpture, or painting have a more vital and tremendous theme. No artist has been more successful than Michelangelo in the general perfection of work and the splendid adaptation of details. Leonardo is said to have spent four years on a woman's face and then called it unfinished; Michelangelo spent four years on a work that has been the marvel of four centuries and must be counted as the greatest piece of work that ever came from the brain and brush of mortal man.

It would be interesting to follow this great creator thru the devious but comparatively profitless years from 1516 when he seems to have ceased any continuous work upon the mausoleum of Julius, to the year 1530 when Florence came under the hereditary rule of the Medici, but we must be content with most scanty notice.

Leo X, who followed Julius, commissioned Angelo to decorate the façade of the church of San Lorenzo in Florence. A veneer of marble was the common finish for the Italian churches, and this had not been applied to San Lorenzo. Designs were made, marble was quarried, but all came to naught; the front of San Lorenzo is still unfinished. Adrian followed Leo.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

He hated art, and would have pulled down the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel if he had dared. Artists left Rome, and never returned in any great numbers. The Golden Age of art in Rome was at an end. Clement VII, a Medici, followed, but suffered a siege and the sack of Rome by the Germans who thought the pope was the Antichrist, for Luther had spoken in Germany. In this turmoil, Michelangelo had watched out the lives of all great artists who had been his worthy rivals, and had seen their places taken by a crowd of imitators who received the popular favor. He had been passed by and an important commission had been given to the weakling Bandinelli. He had been compelled by the popes to work at unwelcome commissions. He had been annoyed and threatened by the heirs of Julius II because the mausoleum was not finished. He had fought for the liberty of his native city, Florence, and had seen it go down in defeat. His own life had been declared forfeit. He saw his fellow citizens servilely accept the Medici as hereditary rulers where in the olden days neither Cosimo nor Lorenzo had ever held an elective office. Thru despairing struggle and bitterness of soul, he had survived unto a generation of sycophants and servile followers.

It is with this background in mind that we should study the tombs of the Medici in the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo. They were born of these days of stress and sorrow. With these facts in mind one will understand Michelangelo's words in answer to Strozzi. In expressing his admiration of one of the statues, the figure of Night, Strozzi wrote underneath:



## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

“Carved by an Angel in this marble white  
Sweetly reposing, lo, the Goddess Night.  
Calmly she sleeps, and so must living be.  
Awake her gently and she will speak to thee.”

And Michelangelo wrote for his statue:

“Grateful is sleep while wrong and shame survive;  
More grateful still in senseless stone to live;  
Gladly both sight and hearing I forego.  
O then awake me not! Hush! Whisper low.”

It was with a heart burning with a sense of wrong and shame that Michelangelo conceived and labored at these tombs of the Medici. If any other proof were needed, it is afforded by the fact that on the death of Clement in 1534, Michelangelo quit the Sacristy and never entered it again.

The commission had originally been given by Leo and later by Clement. The intention was to make it the mausoleum of some of the Medici, including Lorenzo the Magnificent. Only two tombs were brought to a state of completion after the death of Michelangelo. Who were buried in these, we do not certainly know. The accepted belief is that they are the tombs of Giuliano, brother of Leo, the Duke of Nemours; and Lorenzo, grandson of the Magnificent, the Duke of Urbino.

As one enters the cold cheerless Sacristy, the tomb that faces the visitor is that of Giuliano. But it is not Giuliano, up in his niche, that catches and holds the gaze; it is that mighty giant who seems, like the Bound Slave, to be trying to burst thru the unfinished

*THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART*



MICHELANGELO: TOMB OF GIULIANO DE' MEDICI

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

stone; who glares at us from under dark eyebrows; who would leap at us with the power and abandon of a Hercules, and would mercilessly drive us from his sight. It is Day, the day of wrong and shame, that looks out from the half-carved marble with bitterness and resentfulness. The power of much of Rodin's work is due to the imaginative appeal of a mass of untouched stone. Did he get the secret from the figure of Day in the New Sacristy?

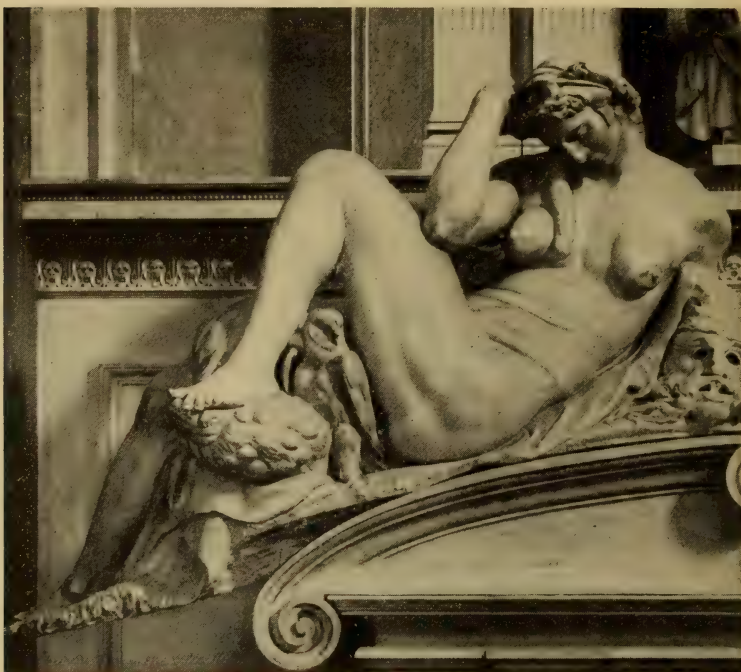
In sharp contrast with the Day is the highly polished and carefully modeled figure of Night on this same tomb. There are very few of Angelo's works that have been carried thru to the polishing stage. The fact suggests his interest in this. He must have been well satisfied with the idea and his craft, or his hand would have turned to the birth of some other thought that was just waiting its opportunity in his teeming brain. It is a nude female figure in the power of sleep. Discomfort is everywhere; in the left arm that stretches the ligaments of the shoulder; in the right arm that tries to find some support in the up-raised left thigh; in the head that has dropped from its supporting arm; in the sliding position of the whole figure that seems to rest insecurely upon the top of the tomb. Sleep comes from overpowering fatigue, and in such a position, can bring no rest or refreshment to the body. When she wakes it will only be to consciousness of her pain. Sleeping she rests not; awake she suffers. She is the woe of Florence; it is not strange that she fascinated the bitter soul of Michelangelo.

Giuliano sits above these marvels of sculpture,



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

clad in a coat of mail, feebly holding the baton of power across his knees, and looking away at something which we may only surmise. His left knee is drawn back as if he would rise, but otherwise there



MICHELANGELO: TOMB OF GIULIANO DE' MEDICI, DETAIL

is no decisiveness. In so far as it is a characterization, it is far from flattering tho there is no bitterness in it. The explanation seems to be that the work upon it was far along before the calamities of 1527, when Rome was sacked and Florence besieged.

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

Evidently the niches on either side of Giuliano were to be filled, but nothing was ever done to the figures.

The tomb of Lorenzo is on the wall opposite the one we have been studying. The symbolic figures are called Dawn and Twilight. Twilight is a man, resting very insecurely on the tomb, but not in a state of extreme discomfort. Dawn, or Aurora, is awaking. She turns her painridden body slowly toward us as she lifts herself upon her right arm. Misery is in the lines of her mouth; suffering in the curl of the nostrils; agony in her hollow eyes. As if to intensify her appeal to our sympathy, the artist has dressed her head to show what her comeliness was before she was stricken with grief. Whoever has looked upon the original has been haunted by that face for many a day.

Lost to the world of sense and action sits the figure of Lorenzo in his niche above these two. His right foot rests in front of the left with no suggestion of action. His right arm is in a position of arrested motion, tho one wonders why Angelo chose this particular position. His left elbow rests upon the arm of the chair while the hand covers the mouth. His head droops slightly and is covered by a broad helmet that throws his eyes and forehead into a deep shadow. His eyes see nothing, but his brain is active. He thinks, but he has reached no conclusion; or if he has, the conclusion but raises another problem. Who cares any more than did Michelangelo whether this is a portrait of Lorenzo? It is the eternal human thinker who asks, "Why am I here? Why do I suffer?"

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MICHELANGELO: TOMB OF LORENZO DE' MEDICI, DETAIL



## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

Why is there wrong and shame in the world? How can I be happy?" One inevitably compares this thinker of a life of culture with that other thinker of Rodin, that brute man with the frame of a Hercules, who for the first time in the world turns round upon himself and asks, "Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here?" And no more reaches a decision than does the man of civilization.

It is impossible to have any placid joy in looking at these tombs of the Medici. Some sculpture, like some music, is mellow and becomes a part of one's life without disturbing the even tenor of our way. It is not so in front of these. If one does not rise out of himself into the great passion of Michelangelo, the figures will repel by their very grandeur. Again, if one asks for the repose of a Theseus or the classic beauty of a Praxiteles, there will be no appeal in these figures that are restless in position and bursting with feeling. Perhaps the arrow has gone too deep into the soul of the artist; perhaps the *terribilita* that his own generation imputed to him has carried him beyond the limits of his art; perhaps one may see the influence of the Laocoön which came to light in 1506; but certain it is that no one can call these statues beautiful. They are sublime in their passion and marvelous in their execution.

Paul III became pope on the death of Clement. After the usual bickerings and dickerings about the tomb of Julius, Michelangelo was asked to go back into the Sistine Chapel and paint the Last Judgment on the wall over the altar. He protested and delayed, but finally started the work. It was fin-

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

ished in 1541. To protect the picture from the dust, the wall was slightly built out at the top, but this seems to have allowed the candle smoke from below to do a more deadly work, and today it is difficult to judge the work as a piece of color. It is so dingy that even lines and forms are indistinct.

But there is no difficulty in seeing the essentials of what Michelangelo wanted us to see. High up in the middle, Christ as the awful judge, attended by his shrinking mother, rises from his seat in denunciation of the wicked on his left. On his right are gathered forms neither of beauty nor of joy. The middle space is filled with forms that on the one side rise into life, and on the other drop away to the bank of a river where the boatman drives those he has carried across away in abject terror to the punishments Angelo does not reveal.

There is not a single joyful face in the whole composition. There is not a single beautiful body tho almost all were nudes. There is hardly an attitude that is either beautiful or joyful. There is abundance of those powerful masses of muscles on huge bodies that in other places were laden with meaning, but are meaningless here. The time and place and people are terrible to behold. Perhaps it was fitting that a great sensitive soul that had passed thru sixty years of achievement in the midst of stings and lashings should have been commissioned to paint the Last Judgment in the chapel where at thirty-five he painted the highest hopes of his Christian faith; but the contrast is indeed great. If the Laocoön is full of the degeneracy of Greek art, in the same way and for the same

MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI



MICHELANGELO: LAST JUDGMENT, SISTINE CHAPEL



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

reasons the Last Judgment belongs to the feebler days and over-elaborated art of Michelangelo.

The work was not without criticism at the time it was finished. This was directed in particular at the nudity of the figures. Aretino wrote that they belonged to a luxurious bathroom rather than to the private chapel of the popes. Biagio, master of ceremonies at the papal court, seems to have been a leader in this sort of criticism, which of course was not pleasing to Michelangelo. To show his displeasure it is told that he painted Biagio in the lower right hand corner of the picture among the condemned. Biagio was furious when he learned this, and again went to the pope for help. With a fine sense of humor the old pope said: "He has painted you in Hell, has he? Now if he had put you in Purgatory, I might have done something for you; but Hell is out of my jurisdiction." Nevertheless, the criticisms finally resulted in patching up many of the figures with clothes.

In 1546, Michelangelo was appointed director of the construction of the church of St. Peter's. This office he held under changing popes and many petty jealousies until his death nearly twenty years afterward. In 1506, forty years before Michelangelo's appointment, Bramante had planned the church, but so great was the task that various architects had but completed the four massive piers and arches that rose nearly 150 feet in the air to support the lofty dome. These piers are nearly square and have an extreme dimension of more than 50 feet. Protesting that Bramante's plan was the best, Michelangelo brushed away all the changes that had been

## MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI

made in it, and proceeded to carry out the form of the Greek cross. While he did not see the dome rise to completion, he left so accurate a model for it that his plans were carried on after his death to successful completion. Later architects robbed it of much of its effectiveness by lengthening the nave so that the tall façade prevents one from seeing the majesty of the dome from the fine square in front.

The dome of St. Peter's is the architectural monument of Michelangelo. Tho it is far from perfect in its technical details, it is a thing of beauty and mighty in its impressiveness. When one stands under it, and looks up sheer thru the glorious haze of summer light into the lantern 404 feet away, there are few things in all the architectural world that may be compared with it. It is as beautiful as Brunelleschi's dome and far more impressive.

Along with the dome, we must remember the plans for the front of San Lorenzo, the Laurentian Library, the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo, and the square upon the Capitoline, if we would make any just estimate of Michelangelo as an architect.

In the midst of these multifarious duties of his later years, Michelangelo composed many beautiful sonnets. He wrote many letters. He found one woman who seems to have interested him to the point of love. Vittoria Colonna was a woman of rare personality, of the mighty family of the Colonna, and therefore tossed and wrecked in the intrigues of the times. In this woman of fine taste and large experience, Michelangelo found perfect comradeship and sweet inspiration.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

The days of painting and sculpture had passed by; schemes for great buildings and the beautification of Rome occupied his days; but in his secret studio, where no one entered but himself and his old servant Urbino, he still plied the mallet and chisel when the nights grew long with sleeplessness. He attached a candle to the front of his cap, and with more or less uncertain strokes, chiseled away at what was to be his last work in marble. We know not when it was begun nor when he did his last work upon it. Whether Michelangelo ever intended it as his last monument, as Vasari has maintained, it has come to have that pathetic interest. It is the Pietà that stands in the semi-darkness back of the choir in the cathedral of Florence under the mighty dome of Brunelleschi. It is unfinished, whether because the marble developed a flaw, or because the old man's hands became too unsteady at the age of eighty and more.

It is a group of four. The body of Jesus slightly sprawls; the limbs twist; the head drops over against the head of Mary the Mother who caressingly supports it. On the other side Mary Magdalene helps, tho she averts her head in humility of spirit. She is grateful, but not worthy to touch Him. Back of these three and towering above in his largeness and strength is Joseph of Arimathea who laid the body in his own tomb. He bears the face of Michelangelo himself. It is not strange that the studio that held this figure was barred to all, even good friends. The thought of his work was too personal, too sacred for inquisitive eyes. It was the thought which occupied his young manhood when he had represented a young



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MICHELANGELO: PIETÀ, CATHEDRAL OF FLORENCE

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

mother's sacrifice and resignation. Now it is the personal relation of an old man whose earth life is short and whose thought turns strongly and searchingly upon another. The group was conceived in reverence and tenderest love; it was executed in earthly loneliness and with shaking hands; it is touching in its pathos and its perfect representation of the longings and hopes of each human heart when it comes upon the deepest things about itself.

In his ninetieth year the call which the old man had long anticipated came. He had lived long in Rome, but he asked for a burial in Florence. His relative from Florence, who only arrived after his death, quietly but swiftly arranged for the transport of the body. It was sent out of Rome as a bale of merchandise, "that no tumult might arise in the city." Of course the love of the people for shrines and the miraculous powers that were attributed to the bodies of the great and the pious explain this last statement of Vasari's. In Florence a sumptuous funeral ceremony was held in which the artists were particularly prominent, and the body was laid away in St. Croce, the Pantheon of Florence.

## CHAPTER XIV

### GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

**I**T was among the great honors of that "grand old man", Giovanni Bellini (Chap. VIII), to train the two greatest artists of his own city, who rank among the greatest that have ever lived. Even before he had laid aside his brush, they equaled his best, and in some regards, went far in advance of him. The advances of his later years are no doubt largely due to the influence of one of these distinguished pupils.

Giorgione and Titian seem to have been born the same year, 1477, but as Giorgione matured earlier, strongly influenced Titian's art, and died before Titian's reputation was on a solid basis, he should be studied first.

Giorgione is as elusive as Masaccio. There is extremely little that we can say with certainty about his life; much is affirmed on comparatively slight evidence. He was born at Castelfranco, a town about thirty miles to the northwest of Venice. On coming to the metropolis, he entered the studio of Bellini. Along with Titian, he decorated the exterior of the Fondaco del Tedeschi, or warehouse of the German merchants. One painting can be attributed to him with great certainty, the Castelfranco Madonna. The most scholarly critics assign several others to him, but in these, they are not at all unanimous.



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

We must build our ideas of his style and ideals from the Castelfranco picture, which we know was painted for the church of San Liberale of his home town. It is striking for its old motives, such as pleased Bellini, with a point of view that is unmistakably different. The picture is a votive offering by a father in memory of his dead son. Saint George, patron of warriors, and Liberale, patron of the church, are the saints introduced to accompany the Madonna. She is a sweet, lovable girl, after the heart of Bellini, and the Child is much like his in the Madonna of the Two Trees, or the Madonna of the Frari.

While these are painted with mastery according to the best of the old traditions and something more, the distinction of the picture is in its innovations. The Madonna is enthroned out of doors upon an unusually high pedestal. It is morning. A soft light fills the sky and falls on water and shore. The foreground is yet wrapped in shadows. Lines and forms are mysterious. The gradations from high lights into the deep shadows are most delicate. Light and air are here more fully felt than in the work of any earlier master, unless it be Carpaccio.

As we have rarely seen in Italian art, landscape is most potent in repeating the mood of the figures. The soft air of the morning is in perfect accord with the dreamy attitude of the Madonna and her accompanying saints. Nature here has certainly ceased to be "devilish", and is far on the way toward becoming an inspiration to high thoughts.

It is agreed that Giorgione painted other nature subjects; but some of them are at the same time so

GIORGIONE AND TITIAN



GIORGIONE: CASTELFRANCO MADONNA, DETAIL

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

full of a degenerate spirit in the portrayal of sex that it is difficult to believe they are from the hand that painted the pure Castelfranco Madonna. One much more easily accepts the attribution of the Sleeping Venus, for the nude here has the purity of spirit which one would expect at this stage in the development of Venetian art.

Perhaps we are safe in thinking of the Knight of Malta as the best example of Giorgione's efforts in portraiture. The figure fills the composition with its splendid physical development. It is robed in rich brocaded velvet, out of the shadow of which gleams the half of a Maltese cross on the left breast. The right hand, with genteel lines and beautiful proportions, makes a spot of high value at the lower left hand corner. An insert of some frilled material reënforces the light mass of the neck, and dominates the middle of the composition. A string of beads relieves this mass, and some conversation beads with beautiful high lights add to the interest of the hand.

But the head is, after all, the great distinction of the picture. It is crowned with a great mass of dark silken hair that melts into the background at the left and is but gently lifted on the right. It is parted in the middle, curves well forward over the temples, and ends low upon the neck in rich masses which show a tendency to curl. A full beard, soft but cropped at the chin, carries the value of the hair as a frame about the face. It is a well-formed face, with perhaps a tendency toward the oriental,—not at all surprising when we think of the Eastern connections



## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

of Venice. Here is a profound self-respect, the basis of respect for others. Here is an honorable soul, whose honor is not carried on his sleeve and does not



GIORGIONE: KNIGHT OF MALTA

consist alone in his oath as a chevalier. A sense of mystery, of reserve power, of introspection and idealism, pervades the picture. Does one realize how much the magic of his effects is due to Giorgione's masterly use of shadows?

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

There are some pretty arguments about the authorship of *The Concert*. Giorgione and Titian have their respective adherents with the later critics inclining toward Titian; but it illustrates so fully



GIORGIONE: THE CONCERT

what was best in the art of Giorgione that we will keep the older attribution.

Its theme is music. We see a man at the harpsichord, a monk with a viola, and a spectator; acces-

## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

sories are buried in shadow and three faces dominate the attention.

The dominant tone is a golden yellow, mellow with age and broken up into many subtle overtones. Textures are delicately rendered and the modeling is most careful, especially in the central figure. Here again the general effect is determined by the bold and intelligent use of shadows. There are the large masses of high value in contrast with low, and the melting of one into the other, so that it is difficult to trace lines and complete forms. Yet there is line and form where the artist wished to use them. He could draw wonderfully well.

The figures are chosen for their potential appreciation of music. The man with the feather (or is it a woman?) is very common clay which may never vibrate sympathetically in response to the fine strains of the harpsichord. Why did Giorgione cumber his composition with this sharp contrast? The figure is scarcely needed, even as a space filler.

The monk friend holds in his left hand an instrument, a viola perhaps, while his right hand rests on the shoulder of the player at the harpsichord. His face is not as vibrant as it ought to be for a perfect concert, but perhaps this was intended to put a greater emphasis on the center of the composition.

The real musician holds the center of attention. His fingers are long, supple and strong. His hair is soft and careless. His mouth is sensitive. His eyes reveal a soul that draws heavily on the physical vitality of the man. His face and form are all a-tingle with emotion. Perhaps he strikes some re-



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

sounding chord, or repeats a haunting strain. Nowhere in art is there a figure that more completely embodies the spirit of music. "Nowhere else in all art has any one so seized the melody of an instant and kept its fullness and passion sounding in our ears as this musician does."

If we accept these pictures as typical of Giorgione's contribution, we get the change of temper that characterized the Cinquecento in Venice. Florentine composition and old Venetian were more or less methodical and formal. Color tones were laid on after a careful line drawing had been made. The statuesque had characterized the work of Mantegna and, to a certain extent, Bellini. In Giorgione everything is freedom. Repose there is, but it is the repose that is voluntary, that comes after activity. Mystery has come into art; not the mystery of Christian miracles, but the mystery of twilight, of luminous shadows, of light losing itself in shadows, of forms moving in the mystery of air. Life is as affable, handsome, richly colored and dreamy as Giorgione himself is said to have been. It is the reign of the loves and hates of humanity rather than rationalism. It is an art that is perfumed with the air from the land of the Lotus and the Orient.

### TITIAN

Perhaps there has never been among artists one who so happily and completely has been the exponent of his time and people as Titian. He was born at the right time. His training was adequate. His temperament and ideals were in hearty accord

## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

with his environment. And his years gave his personality full opportunity to reach full bloom. Leonardo and Michelangelo were enticed into greatly varied activities and unfortunate in their patrons. Raphael's life was too short, as was Giorgione's. Del Sarto was burdened by friends and temperament. Giovanni Bellini was born too early. One might carry the parallel outside of Italy with the same result. Titian in Florence or Rome would never have reached the heights he did in Venice. Titian needed Venice and Venice was glad to lavish her honors on her most distinguished artist, at the most magnificent period in her history.

Tiziano Vecelli, 1477-1576, was born in a very beautiful mountain region about eighty miles to the north of Venice, in the little town of Cadore. By bounding mountain streams, on the foliage-covered mountain side, watching the rose colors on the sun-blazing peaks, familiar with the panorama of light and shade from morn till eve, the boy spent ten years of his life; and then was transferred to the flats of Venice and low-lying sky line. Would it be surprising if the pictures of the later years should echo with the skies and peaks of his boyhood?

He became a student in the bottega of Giovanni Bellini where he met the young Giorgione. This acquaintance seems to have been fortunate for both. Giorgione's genius matured earlier and led the slower Titian along the way of an emancipated art. Titian, more fortunate in the gift of years, brought the art of Giorgione to full maturity in his own.

Unless we grant Titian the authorship of the dis-

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

puted Concert, or accept the Tribute Money as an early painting, he produced no great masterpiece while Giorgione was alive. But between 1511 and 1518 there are several, all reminiscent of his friend. Sacred and Profane Love reminds us of the *Fêtes Champêtre*; and the Man with the Glove, of the Knight of Malta. By 1518, he had completed one, The Assumption of the Virgin, that clearly demonstrated he had arrived at complete mastery of an individual style. One great patron after another was added to his list, and honors and wealth were his for the rest of his life.

In 1518, Alphonso of Ferrara asked for a series of Bacchanalian scenes, among which were painted the well known Bacchus and Ariadne. Gonzaga of Mantua asked for portraits, and about this time the Entombment was painted. In 1530, he became acquainted with Charles V, for whom he afterward painted many pictures. In 1545 he made a long contemplated trip to Rome, where he met Michelangelo and painted a portrait of Paul III. He crossed the Alps, painted for Philip II of Spain, leaving behind him for the gallery at Madrid many of his finest works.

Titian's private life and character are far from impeccable, judged by standards of the present day; even his contemporaries had their complaints. He had a wife and two children before the formal ceremony in 1525, a daughter was born later, and the wife died in 1530. He did not marry again, but installed a sister as housekeeper. The eldest of the children, Pomponio, turned out to be a clerical scapegrace. Orazio became a fair painter and a good busi-



## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

ness man. Lavinia, the only daughter, was greatly loved and well-dowered by her father, and several portraits of her were painted by him. After the death of her aunt, Lavinia seems to have been the mistress of the grand establishment Titian had set up when his income became generous. He proved lavish as an entertainer, but miserly in his business relations. He placed a high value on his pictures and at the same time was begging for sinecures for himself or his children. Perhaps it was his avariciousness that explains his friendship for Aretino. This rascal was a sincere admirer of the art of Titian and at the same time was an author with a splendid command of language. He became a great press-agent for Titian, no doubt doing much to spread his name and increase his popularity and therefore his income. Titian was a good advertiser, but he selected a medium that was very "yellow."

The Venice into which Titian was ushered as a young man at the beginning of the sixteenth century was the proudest city in the world, and the most beautiful. Tho the voyages of Columbus and Vasco de Gama had started a change in the trade routes that finally deprived Venice of her income and prestige, in 1500 no one in the city was conscious of any change, nor was any apparent for several decades. Indeed, her enemies so little perceived what was actually taking place and feared her so much that in 1508 they formed the league of Cambray to take her life. Be it said that Venice was strong enough to resist the great power of the empire and pope. The war affected her land power but not that on the Ad-

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

riatic and in the East. This was threatened and weakened by her contest with the Turks.

The Venetian system of government deprived the individual of many of the incentives to personal



TITIAN: SELF

aggrandizement that were open to citizens of Florence, with the result that there was a glorification of the state and a loyalty to it that did not exist elsewhere. Fêtes, pageants, displays of color and feeling,

## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

were almost a part of the daily life of the people. The state was their religion. St. Mark's was set behind the Doge's Palace and was really an appendage of the government. The Patriarch of Venice was virtually independent of the pope. Threats of excommunication did not sway the Venetians from their course. Religion for the individual was made up of natural desires and a moral code that suited the state. Christian doctrine became one part of life rather than



Medea      TITIAN: SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE      Venus

a controlling factor. All things in life were good to be enjoyed without excess.

Into the whirl of this pagan Venice, the young Titian was introduced, but it did not carry him off his feet. He matured slowly under the fostering genius of his friend Giorgione. Perhaps we dare say that the great personality of Titian is not apparent before he finished the *Assumption* in 1518. To the early or Giorgionesque period belong some allegorical pieces as *Sacred and Profane Love*, and the *Flora*; some portraits, as the *Man with the Glove*, and the *Physician Parma*; and some religious pictures as the



THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



TITIAN: SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE, DETAIL

## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

Tribute Money, and the Assumption. Early period? And Titian was forty!

The Venus and Medea is better known as Artless and Sated Love, or Sacred and Profane Love. It seems very definitely a reminiscence of the allegories of Bellini, and no doubt Bellini was alive when this was painted. (Giovanni died in 1516.) In the absence of a better explanation, one accepts the suggestion that here we have Venus pleading with Medea to follow her love for Jason and flee in the Argo. The castle on the hill is sunlit and the ocean invites with its deep blue. The two figures are seated at a fountain, the marble front of which is decorated in bas-relief, and in which Cupid splashes as he looks into its watery depths. The women are in sharp contrast—one is clothed, the other nude; one is insistent and persuasive, the other, rather resistant and introspective; and yet they are much alike in the contour of their faces. Medea is somewhat overloaded with drapery, in contrast with the freedom and grace of the undraped body of Venus.

The same general type of face is found in the Flora which is usually assigned to Titian's early period; in fact, it is easy to believe that the same model was used for the two pictures. The allegorical element is not so prominent; and it is well, for the figure needs no story to make her interesting. Nor is there any attempt at profound characterization; line and form and color are here their own excuse for being. The radial lines that fall from the shoulder over arm and bosom; the radial lines of her soft auburn hair; and the radiation round about the left hand make a

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

supérb line composition. The subtle graduation of values in face and on neck and bosom, the soft shadows in the undergarment, and the rich but delicate color tones make one careless whether one looks into



TITIAN: FLORA

the soul of the subject so long as the eye is charmed. And yet the face is by no means so vacant as many writers would have us believe. Personality looks out, even if the face is placid.

Tho one refuses to admit the preceding pictures as



## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

great characterizations, one can hardly deny the power of some of the portraits of men in this period. The Man with the Glove, the Physician Parma, and the so-called Ariosto are all splendid characterizations. Ariosto is definitely Giorgionesque in type and dominant mood. The Man with the Glove, too, is dreamy, but living. The Physician Parma is distinguished for dress and mentality. With these and other unknowns, Titian comes into maturity as a portrait painter, and is ready for that long list of distinguished sitters among the great men of his generation,—dukes and popes and emperors.

Great as he was in imaginative and portrait studies in his early period, he is greatest in religious illustration. The Tribute Money was painted between 1508 and 1514 for Alphonso d'Este, who had as a favorite motto, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." It portrays that memorable moment in the life of Jesus when his enemies hoped to convict him of treason, either to the Romans, or to his own people. Later in life, Titian might have treated the moment in a more dramatic way, but now it is sufficient, he thinks, to center our attention on the two main characters, leaving out all accessories with opportunities for surging emotions. Primarily, the picture is a contrast of types,—the wily plotting Pharisee and the calmly frank Jesus. The face and form of the Pharisee show the toiler rather than the scholar. He has no illusions, and no imagination but shrewdness. He is hard-headed and cunning. His face is expectant and triumphant; there is no escape from his net.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Now put yourself in the place of Titian. What would you put into the face of Jesus? Would you put indignation? or malevolence? or triumph? or



TITIAN: TRIBUTE MONEY

compassion? The moment is so burdened with the future and so vocal with the past of the life of Jesus that it taxes the reason and imagination to think what type and what emotions are most adequate. Titian has contented himself with a very simple solution.

## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

The face is characterized by calmness at a tense moment; by frankness where strategy might easily be dominant; by tenderness where a fiery tongue and burning words might consume. To some the Tribute Money will always be disappointing because they demand more of the positive in the character of Jesus; but if Titian failed here, he failed with all the painters of the Renaissance. Both he and Leonardo voice the conception held thruout the church of their day.

With the painting of the Assumption of the Virgin in 1516-1518, we reach the climax of Titian's first period, if not of all his life. If anything was needed to make his reputation, this picture did it. The stately calm of Bellini is in the past; the lyric poetry of Giorgione has swollen into the great dramatic music that fills the ears and souls of the men of Titian's time. Titian has arrived, tho forty years have gone by.

The Assumption was painted for the church of the Frari, and remained there for three hundred years. It had become so dingy with dust and altar smoke that Napoleon's generals decided, when they were pillaging Italy, that it was not worth carrying to Paris. In the renewed interest which the Italians took in the masterpieces that remained, this was discovered, cleaned, and removed to the Academy in 1818. Here the light was far stronger than it was in the old church, and the color harmony suffered accordingly; but the picture was so hung that it could be viewed thru a doorway, many feet away, so that there was partial atonement for the strong light. Now that the Frari is restored, it has fortunately been returned to its original position.



THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART



TITIAN: THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN, CHURCH OF THE FRARI

## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

In the composition, there are three fairly distinct parts. Below is the group of the disciples. Mid-way is the Madonna, borne up by clouds and joyful cherubs. Above is the Father and the heavenly hosts, coming out of the sky to meet her who is to be the queen of heaven. Whenever an artist divides his composition like this, he makes for himself a serious problem,—the unification of the different parts. You may recall Andrea del Sarto's picture of this same subject. A very strong line and dark space divides the lower and upper parts of the picture, and the failure in unity is very marked. Or recall Raphael's Transfiguration, with the scene on the mountain top and another at the foot, where the disciples are gathered about a boy possessed by an evil spirit. The lack of unity makes a failure of the composition. Titian has set himself a more serious problem in that he has divided his composition into three parts, and has achieved a great triumph in bringing them into a happy unity.

He has united them by heightening his values from bottom to top. At the base, the values are deep, the shadows strong, forming a support for the middle values about the Madonna. At the top, the light is so intense that the faces of the angels are lost, and become only a halo against which the form of the Father is in sharp silhouette.

The colors, too, do their part toward unity. The picture builds on deep reds, and fades away at the top in golden yellow. In the middle, where the great center of attention is found, the contrasts of color are most brilliant. Reds and greens, blues and

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

yellows, draw the eye inevitably to that part of the picture.

Tho the lines of the composition are not so definite as they would be in the work of a Florentine



TITIAN: THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN, DETAIL

painter, the lines of suggestion are important in the harmony of the composition. The faces of the apostles are almost all turned upward. The strong arm of one of them almost bridges the distance to the middle



## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

portion, while the body of one of the most attractive of the little angels almost touches the head of an apostle. The Madonna's gaze is upward, the Father's is down, and an encircling dome of angels broods over the whole.

Titian's next great problem is to make us feel that the Madonna is really rising. Some writers tell us that she rises by "her own inherent power", but that is little comfort to the painter whose task it is to make us feel this. It was a very material problem that faced Titian. In the first place, he has given her space into which to rise. In del Sarto's picture, the head of the Madonna is within a foot of the frame. Of course there is a feeling of disturbance; the frame is perilously close, and there is no sky. In Titian's picture, there is a great space above her where a limitless host already rejoice and into which they gladly receive her. She has her arms extended and her eyes follow their direction. Then there are the lifting angels, who seem strong enough to carry the Madonna out of our sight. But perhaps the greatest help in inducing the feeling of soaring is the whirl of the picture, usually unnoticed. At the right of the Madonna, the colors are strong and aggressive; at the left, cool and receding. At the right, the forms of the apostles and angels are stronger and more insistent than at the left. These correspond to the whirl of the Madonna's robe. It was not for the purpose of revealing a fine pair of feet that Titian lifted her robe, but that by the whirl of her garments he might make more real the rise of the Madonna into the sky.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

This superb craftsmanship has been full of suggestions of beauty, both physical and spiritual; but leaving craftsmanship behind and thinking of that for which brush and line and color exist, one comes upon the greatest and best in the picture. Greatness in art consists not alone in the fact that the artist is a consummate master of brush and palette. He must be this to win the approval of his own generation. If he lives to appeal to other generations with improved craftsmanship, fuller knowledge of color, light and science, he must have been stirred by a great vision that fretted and struggled in the prison house of his brain to free itself forever in the glories of the painter's canvas. The artist who is satisfied to see nature clearly and correctly, and to paint just what he sees, may please by the brilliancy of his color or the boldness of his methods, but his popularity fades with his presence. It is only the men of vision who endure.

Titian's vision is of the Madonna. For her, all this line and color; for her, this great assembly of stalwart men and dainty angels; for her, the empty tomb and the heavenly hosts. Is she worthy? Put in her place a woman of Raphael's or Murillo's, or any other favorite, and see how she fares! She has been the mother of him who was the greatest among men. Now, according to the belief of the church, she is to become the queen of heaven, the supreme honor of womanhood. To make her worthy Titian has given her a magnificent physique. Is there in all the world of art a madonna who has a finer figure than she? Her head is large, her body strong, her hands

## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

delicate, and the lines of her figure superb. She is physically able to bear the strain and the honor.

Not only is this woman physically able, but she has soul capacity equally remarkable. How many of the delicate women that pose as madonnas in art ever had the largeness of soul that must have marked the mother of the Christ? This woman has the self-control and the far vision that were necessary in the development of his life and would give comfort in the trying years of his ministry and death. After all these years of trouble, her face is not seamed and wrinkled, but is yet radiant with emotions that well up from a deep and abundant source. She feels no ecstasy, as does the madonna in Murillo's Immaculate Conception; nor has she the shrinking fear of Raphael's Sistine; but she does show the full and joyful acceptance of a gift, the greatness of which she recognizes, while realizing a certain worthiness to receive it.

It sometimes happens that part of a picture is better than the whole, that the artist's vision fails him, as in the Sistine Madonna, where the grand conception drops to the depths of useless curtains and cherubs hanging to the frame. That is not true of the Assumption. The Madonna is but the heart of a great idea that sought revelation thru the brush of Titian. We may or may not believe that the Madonna rose from the grave to become the queen of heaven, but it is the universal hope that the grave is but the door into another world, that this mortal will be clothed with immortality. With these lines and forms and colors that mingle and glow upon his canvas, Titian has



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

struggled with this vision. He has united into a swelling symphony the realities of the material and mortal with the glorious vision of our faith in the unseen.

It is not strange that Titian, after this success, became the favorite of courts; his reputation was secure; and yet he had more than half a century of active painting ahead of him. The first of these new patrons was Alfonso d'Este, who, in 1518, invited Titian to paint some mythological scenes for the great hall at the court of Ferrara. The best of the series is the Bacchus and Ariadne. In all of them the artist is frankly pagan, and in the Bacchanals he puts splendid color at the service of drunkenness and sensuality. It would be idle to gloss over this phase of Titian's work. There are many pictures in which he celebrates sensuality; there are many more in which the higher reaches of the beautiful are quite lacking.

While Titian is interested in these themes of "the world, the flesh, and the devil", he was also engaged about the same time in painting an impressive interpretation of a Christian theme, The Entombment, now in the Louvre. This is one of the finest line studies in all Titian's work. Note the dominant semicircle formed by the figures of Peter, Joseph of Arimathea, and the head of John. Rhyming with it are the bending bodies of the Maries at the left and the shadow masses at the right. Playing in converse are the hollow lines of the dead body, slipping away into the tomb. How simple and how impressive!

GIORGIONE AND TITIAN



TITIAN: THE ENTOMBMENT

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Light and shade and color are just as expressive. The face of the dead is in the shadow; the body and winding sheet make an impressive mass of high light, the center of attention. Sky and woodland are somber. Masses of reds clothe the figures of Mary Magdalene, John the Beloved, and Joseph at the right. It is rich in color, but simple in the number of figures. It is full of action without any straining as in Raphael's. It is profound in its emotion, but there are no fountains of tears or passionate convulsions of body. No artist has given us a more plausible and convincing interpretation of that very sad moment to the faithful few, when the grave is about to engulf their highest hopes.

While Titian was at work on the Entombment and the Bacchanals, he was also at work on another great Madonna picture. Many years before, Jacopo Pesaro, Bishop of Paphos, had led the papal forces against the Turks, and had been victorious. About 1519, he gave Titian a commission for an altarpiece to be placed in the church of the Frari as a thank offering for success. The picture was put in place in 1526, and still adorns the church.

Titian has opened up the wall and let in the clouds and sky. We look out thru the porch of some massive church at a sky covered with light clouds. One of them has floated in about the two columns of the porch and furnishes support for two cherubs that play with the cross. Of course this cloud is a fine device for breaking the insistent lines of the columns. Below, on a high throne that gives mass to the column pedestal, are Mary and the Child. In the middle



## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

foreground, St. Peter, known by the key at his feet, looks up from his reading, and down toward the kneeling bishop. St. George, the warrior saint, car-



TITIAN: MADONNA OF THE PESARO FAMILY

ries the banner of the pope and brings up two Turkish prisoners. At the right kneel the Pesaro family. St. Francis and St. Anthony, the two great Franciscan saints, are fittingly introduced into this Franciscan picture, to intercede for the donor's family.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

The composition of the picture is its distinctive point. Whereas the Madonna has always had the place of honor in the center of the picture, she is here placed at the side and in balance with the banner of the pope. A diagonal line and the gaze of the Madonna and St. Peter unite the left group with the Madonna. Then the Child playfully looks in the direction of the saints while the figure of St. Francis unites the upper and lower parts on the right; so that we have good balance, tho the center of attention is at one side, and tho the line of union is a diagonal. The line scheme is two perpendiculars connected by a diagonal, somewhat like a reversed N. There are many other niceties of the same sort, all related to this same theme. The line of the standard inclines toward the left, as it ought. St. Peter leans over naturally, but so much as is necessary for the composition. His robe merges with the hangings of the throne on one side and the bishop's robe on the other. The line of Peter's book is taken up by the veiling of the Madonna and carried high into the composition. The figure masses give spread and stability to the architectural masses of the columns.

But line alone would hardly centralize the picture. Color has been used here just as intelligently. The veil of the Madonna is the highest value in the picture. Peter is dressed in a dark blue tunic and a golden yellow mantle—middle values. The bishop is in black,—lowest value. Or, as a whole, the picture mounts in lightness as it mounts in space. Gronau calls the composition "the most important that Titian ever produced".

## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

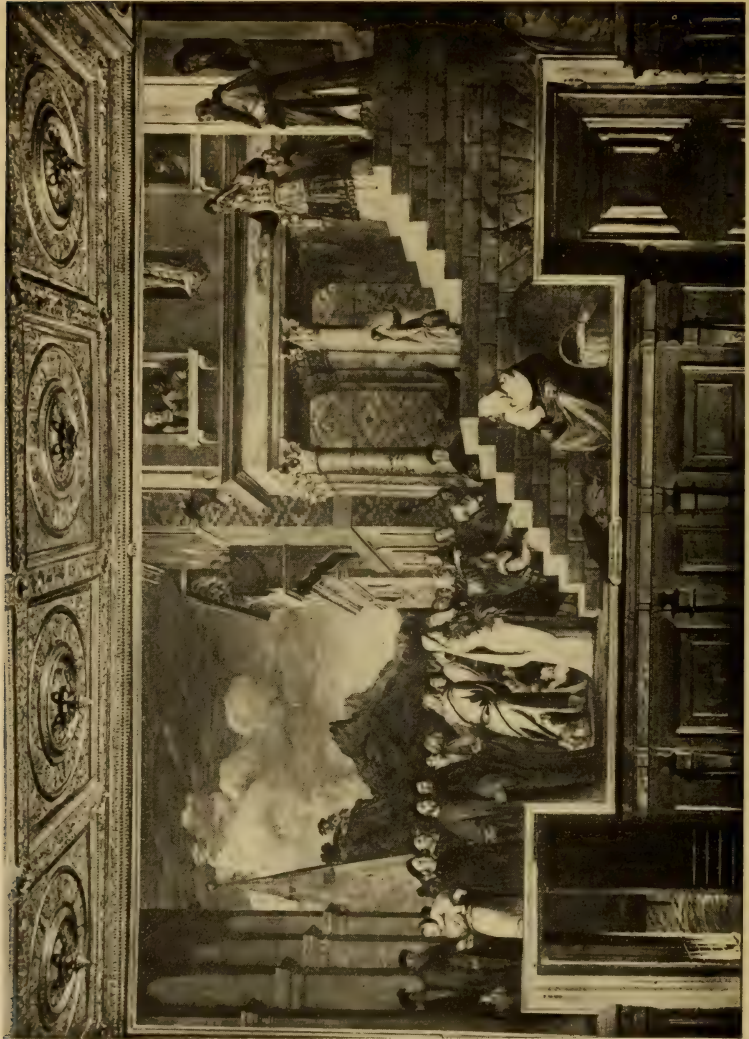
Not the same sort of praise, nor so high, can be given to *The Presentation of the Virgin* of 1540. It is our good fortune to be able to look at this picture in the light under which Titian intended it to be seen. The Academy at Venice is an old convent, for the reception room of which the picture was originally painted, and in which it now hangs. A new door has been cut into the room, and the lower left corner of the picture has suffered accordingly. The old door with its painted rusticated stone is seen at the right.

If the composition of this *Presentation* be compared with Giotto's of the Arena Chapel, with which Titian was no doubt familiar, it suffers in the comparison. In Giotto's, Mary is kept as the center of attention by all means at the command of the painter. In Titian's, Mary is not lost, but the very richness of the accessories forbids that the attention, even when directed to Mary, should long rest there. She is a little mite floating in a sea of magnificence. Neither by line nor color, pure pictorial means, has Titian focused our attention upon her for whom all the rest exist. All the richness of color and glory of architecture do not make up for the weakness in the chief purpose of the picture.

But if one calls this a Venetian pageant, forgetting all reference to Biblical illustration, there is much to satisfy. The magnificent palaces, the mountains of the Dolomites, and the patrician assemblage at the foot of the stairs are perfectly splendid. One who has looked at the original never forgets that grand dame at the foot of the stairs and those men who ought to be Venetian senators, and perhaps are. Even the



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TITIAN: PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN

## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

old woman with the basket of eggs is consummately painted, no doubt with more *éclat* than Mary herself. There is a sophistication, a paganism, and a spectacular magnificence that just fits the Venice and Titian of 1540. Nor must one miss the strong dramatic element. The stately poses of Bellini are still here, but activity and enthusiasm, motivated by a controlling idea, are coming more and more to dominate the compositions of Titian.

No doubt it was the dramatic element that controlled the composition of the great *Ecce Homo* of 1543. Pilate, with the features of Aretino,

presents Jesus to the multitude, and the answer of every face and wild gesture is "Crucify him". The mob is unreasoning and vindictive. Jesus is exhausted, a reed in the storm. He is not a divine sufferer; he is just a defeated and helpless man. We pity



TITIAN: CHRIST CROWNED WITH THORNS

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

him, not because we know that he has been unjustly accused and condemned, but as we pity the weak and unfortunate in any condition. Titian's outlook on life has been changing since he painted the Tribute Money and the Assumption. His method of painting was also changing. He used colors far more subtly. They do not lie in the simple masses of his earlier work; the tones are far more broken and the resulting harmonies far more charming and effective.

With the painting of the Ecce Homo we may properly close a second epoch in Titian's life. He was sixty-six, and might naturally have been thinking of closing his career; but he is thinking of new worlds to conquer. In 1545, he made a visit to Rome and Pope Paul III. He painted many pictures for the Farnese pope, and in particular has left us more than one portrait of Paul the crafty. In that unfinished picture of the Naples museum, Titian has made clear some of the qualities of the old man. He crouches; he suspicions; one feels the volcano that is just ready to burst into eruption and burn away all opposition.

At this time Titian painted the first version of his Danaë, a very beautiful study of the nude. He visited with old Michelangelo, and was impressed with the Sistine Chapel and the recently painted Last Judgment. He enjoyed contact with the classical antiquities, and seems to have regretted that he did not know Rome earlier in life.

After eight months, negotiations regarding permanent employment in Rome were still going on, when an invitation from Charles V settled the matter.



## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

In January of 1548, Titian left Venice for Augsburg. Since he was an old man, the Venetians expected never to see him again, and there was a veritable scramble to get mementoes of their noted painter. He had a quarter of a century yet to live.

One of the finest results of this visit to the north was a great number of portraits of the notables that were gathered at this greatest court of Europe. Of all that have come down to us, the gem is the equestrian portrait of Charles as he appeared at the Battle of Mühlberg in 1547. The landscape background makes no pretense at naturalism; it seems to have been painted in a quite different spirit from the landscape in the Presentation of the Virgin. Charles rides out from a wood at the left toward a river bank at the right, the Elbe. His horse is decorated in deep, rich red. The rider sits erect with a lance in his right hand. He wears armor over which a red scarf is draped. Red, too, gleams from the feathers in his helmet. The face is pale but firm. While it suggests no great intellectual ability, it does show alertness and serious purpose. From all we know of Charles historically, Titian has done exceeding well.

After a period of some months at Augsburg, a second summons came to Titian from Charles, this time to paint the portrait of the heir to the throne, Philip II. This acquaintance brought Titian Philip's patronage for the rest of his life. Tho he never saw Philip again, he painted for him unceasingly, so that it is necessary for one who would know Titian to know the royal gallery at Madrid. Philip first wished

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

for mythological pictures. The Danaë, Perseus and Andromeda, Actæon and Diana, the Rape of Europa, Jupiter and Antiope, are but part of his production.



TITIAN: CHARLES V AT MÜHLBERG

Naturally the nude figure is prominent in all these, and Titian shows a magical mastery for one who had never been trained in the classical figure. Besides these, there is a great mass of religious and allegorical subjects, testifying to the fact that he kept up a real

## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

enthusiasm for work, and that his hand and eye remained steady for long years after the average man has gone to his grave.

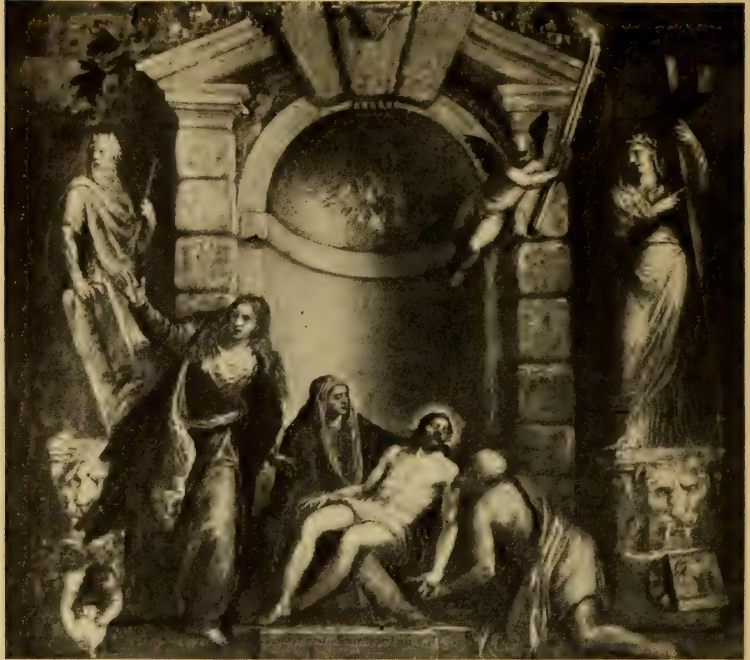
Whether finally he succumbed to old age, or died of the terrible plague that devastated Venice in 1576 is not certain. The stringent quarantine regulations were relaxed for the great artist, and public burial given him in the church of the Frari. For this church, he had already painted two of his great pictures,—the Assumption of the Virgin as the principal altarpiece, and the Pesaro Madonna for the principal supporters of the church. At the time of his death, he was painting a *Pietà* for the Chapel of the Crucified Savior in payment for the privilege of burial in the church. Like Michelangelo's *Pietà*, it was not finished at the time of Titian's death, but was "completed with reverence" by Palma the Younger.

While the *Pietà* never decorated the tomb of Titian, it is in a very real sense a most appropriate last work. Titian had gone the whole round of creation, searching out its riddles and prying into its mysteries. He had met and studied its fair ones and its great. He had lived with *bon vivants* and the intellectual. He had indulged his physical appetites and had exulted in the joys of the spirit. There was hardly any material, having a pictorial quality, that had not passed thru the alembic of his imagination and splashed out upon canvas in glorious line and color. What will this man paint as his last vision and deepest thought for the contemplation of his lovers in succeeding centuries? He might have



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

painted a grinning death, an empty cup, an enigmatic sphinx, to point the emptiness of life; or a Bacchanalian myth, a voluptuous Venus, to point toward sensory pleasure as the best that life offers. Instead,



TITIAN: PIETÀ

he painted one of the most deeply emotional and significant pictures of his whole career.

In front of a great stone niche in an Italian garden wall, with foliage and flowers clambering over its top, Mary holds the limp, pallid corpse of her son. An old man with the features of Titian, from bended

## GIORGIONE AND TITIAN

knees stretches up his body and his face toward the face of the dead. On the other side, Mary Magdalene sways and wails under the burden of her wild grief. Her body is clothed with rich drapery; her golden hair falls about her shoulders in soft ringlets; and her face is flooded with emotion. Her shoulders, extended arm, and head carry the line that rises from the bottom of the picture on the right upward and across into the statue of Moses on the left. If one regards the balance which Titian has used in setting the statue of Love or Faith against that of Moses, one finds the same line composition which was used in the Pesaro Madonna,—two perpendiculars joined by a diagonal. In the semi-dome of the niche is the pelican, tearing at her own breast, that her young may have life. Above, the three stones are symbolic of the Trinity.

Considered as a human document, the beautiful thing about the picture is the contrast between the wild passion and gloomy grief of the human beings and the eternality of the arch of Law and Love that circles above them. "Tho a man die, he shall live again." "He that loseth his life shall find it." "The vanquished here is victor of the field."

It is Titian's last word regarding the meaning of life, and takes rank with Michelangelo's *Pietà*, Browning's *Prospice*, and Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*.

## CHAPTER XV

### CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN IN NORTH ITALY

**G**REAT men are not isolated. They are always connected with some pervasive disturbance of life that affects many places and vivifies many minds. The number of painters in North Italy in the sixteenth century was large, scattered among many cities and influenced more or less by the work of Giorgione and Titian. Only the more distinguished of these can be mentioned in this chapter, but they represent all of the century, beginning with Palma Vecchio who was twenty years old at its beginning to Tintoretto who died only six years before it ended.

Palma was born at Bergamo in 1480, and was therefore a contemporary of the two great masters. Like them, he was attracted from his provincial home to the great city, and shared with them the inspiration of old Giovanni Bellini. When one notes the original way in which he manages the old motives, it is easy to accept the estimate of partisans of Palma who claim him as a great creative genius, sharing honors with the two great masters in the transformation of Venetian art. Apparently he was more popular than Giorgione, ranking next to Bellini, and after Bellini's death, ranking next to Titian in popular estimation.



## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

His favorite theme was the Santa Conversazione, or Madonna and Saints. He introduced and emphasized a background of nature, characterized by large trees close at hand, usually on a slight eminence at left or right, while the landscape stretches away to the distant horizon. The sky is sunny, the air is serene, the outdoors is a good place for exalted thought and holy conversation. Recall Giorgione's *Fête Champêtre* where the outdoors is even more enchanted than Palma's, but where the figures certainly do not engage in exalted thought and holy conversation. The development of interest in landscape was inevitable, but one wonders if the decadence would not have been postponed many, many years, had nature asserted itself in Palma's way rather than Giorgione's.

The figures that Palma painted are never very well studied anatomically. They are loaded with draperies and unnecessary flesh, tho never with the grossness of a Rubens. His best woman figures are well rounded, rather mature, with enameled flesh and golden hair. They are dressed in rich clothing with ample folds, large sleeves, and minutely painted decorative elements. While Palma never penetrated deeply into the secrets of the mind or heart, he did know how to paint surfaces of a certain type, in a masterly way. There is a softness, a femininity, about his figures, that makes us understand why Palma was popular with the Venetians of the early days of the sixteenth century.

A most excellent example of his use of Bible figures with landscape is *The Meeting of Jacob and*

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Rachel, now in the Dresden gallery. Until comparatively recently, the picture was thought to be the work of Giorgione, perhaps because of the idyllic beauty of the landscape, but Palma, too, loved the melodies of the outdoors which he has sung here to the limit of his powers. In this Arcadian land, the lovers meet, clasp hands, and embrace. To their left are two shepherds,—one feeding the sheep, the other gazing with most wistful yearning at the happiness of the lovers.

In single busts, no doubt Palma's most charming work is *Violante*, in the Vienna Gallery. A very doubtful legend is that she was the daughter of Palma and that Titian was her lover. It is more probable that she was a fascinating model whose face appears in both the work of Titian and Palma. Her features are more delicate than is usual with the artist. There is the same careful study of materials, the same abundant golden hair, slightly held back from the temples by a narrow bit of ribbon. Everything attests the dainty feminine taste that is the appeal of the artist's best.

Palma reached his highest in the celebrated altarpiece of *Santa Maria Formosa* in Venice. The commission was given by the *Bombardieri*, or Artillery Guild, for their chapel in this church, and fortunately the picture has never been removed from its original position. It has six panels, three above and three below, but it is the central lower panel that gives special distinction to the work. Here stands the full-length figure of *Santa Barbara*, the patroness of soldiers, (frontispiece) the appropriate person for an

## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

altar at which artillerists offered their prayers for protection, and their thanks for victory. She stands on a wall with frowning cannon on either side her feet, a suggestion of the donors instead of the common portrait. Behind her rises a corbeled tower which recalls the legend of her imprisonment and death. While she was shut up there because her father feared her suitors, she was converted to Christianity, and had three windows opened in suggestion of the Trinity. Her father was furious and in time compassed her martyrdom. She therefore carries a palm branch in her hand and wears a crown upon her head.

Her figure suggests none of the emaciation of the prison, nor any interest on the part of Palma in anatomy. He places before us a well-born and well-developed Venetian woman, clad in draperies that spread to the limits of the frame and fall in refined curves from shoulders and girdle. Make a line study of the figure and note how the knot in the girdle has been made the center of a magnificent scheme of radial lines, a center subordinate only to the face itself. Palma shows how curved lines, usually so troublesome in a decorative composition, may be made harmonious in a composition where the dominant lines are architectural perpendiculars and horizontals.

The composition is just as rich in color as it is perfect in line. But for the sky, it is a study in reds, approaching a vermillion in the overmantel and deepening into a dull brown in the castle wall. Altogether, it is a beautiful decorative study, worthy of more general knowledge and use.



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Palma was not independent enough to found a school. He had influence upon others, but the dominating ideas of Giorgione left no place for his less original style. Bonifazio Veronese was probably an important pupil, but shows more of Giorgione's influence than of Palma's. He took the way of naturalism, and painted scenes from the daily life of the Venetians, as he found it in palace court-yards or the gardens of country villas. One of his best is the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in the Academy at Venice. It is just an incident in the life of a rich Venetian at his country home. He and some richly dressed women (are they his family?) sit at table in the garden, and a very poor, Italian beggar kneels, asking alms. The beautiful details of the garden are put into sharpest contrast with the rags of the beggar. No doubt such scenes were daily enacted in the Venice of the sixteenth century.

To carry the line of influence farther, it is appropriate to name here a pupil of Bonifazio who carried on his painting of genre. This is Jacopo Bassano of a family of painters, who are active thruout the century. Bassano was famous enough to be asked to paint a picture for the Anticollegio of the Ducal palace along with Veronese and Tintoretto. He painted the usual range of themes for churches and private patrons, but whenever possible, he introduced animals of the farm,—cattle, dogs, donkeys—and the peasant to whom they belonged. A subject which he painted many times was The Four Seasons; naturally, for here peasants are at their various kinds of work

## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

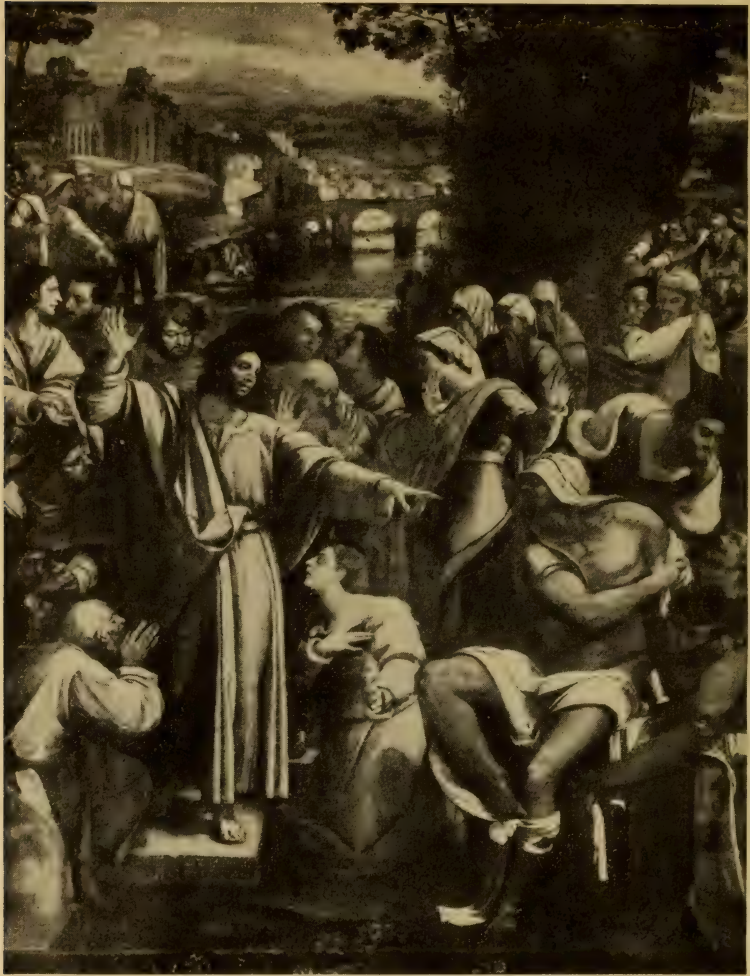
and domesticated animals offer rich opportunities to this first of animal painters.

The man who seems to have been closest to Giorgione, as friend and pupil, was Sebastiano del Piombo, but when he reached the age of twenty-five, in 1510, an invitation came to him from Rome to decorate a part of the Villa Farnesina, and he accepted. His patron, Agostino Chigi, was reputed very wealthy and very influential at the papal court. These facts, with the popularity in Venice of Palma, Giorgione, Titian, and most of all, old Giovanni Bellini, made Sebastian feel that Rome offered a greater future than Venice.

In 1510, Michelangelo was painting in the Sistine. Sebastian became his friend and follower, much to the disadvantage of his art. He imitated the bigness and the bravura, whereas his natural style was much more intimate and soft. This imitative style culminated in *The Raising of Lazarus*. Vasari tells us that Michelangelo was an active helper in the design, and one must believe it on comparing this picture with others of Sebastian's. Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, recognizing the factional feeling that existed between Raphael and the adherents of Angelo, thought to profit by it in giving a commission to Sebastian at the same time he did to Raphael. He hoped that the pride of Angelo would be stirred; and counted on his helping Sebastian, that which Vasari says actually occurred. Raphael's work, as we have already seen, was the unfinished *Transfiguration*.

Of Sebastian's work, Crowe and Cavalcaselle have written very adequately as follows:

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DEL PIOMBO: RAISING OF LAZARUS



## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

"There are few compositions embodying so many incidents of the episode. Mary has fallen at the feet of Christ, saying, 'Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.' Christ, with a loud voice and with gesture of command, cries, 'Lazarus, come forth'; but Lazarus already lives and leans against the edge of the sepulcher, struggling with help out of the graveclothes. Martha and her women in the rear are offended in their nostrils, and cover their faces with veil and handkerchief. The Jews at Jesus' feet fall on their knees and believe; the apostles behind witness the scene, and farther back are those 'who were troubled and went their way to the Pharisees.' The valley, the hills, the river, and the village of Bethany are an imaginative and very picturesque rendering of the principal features of a Tiberine landscape. The houses are those of the Trastevere suburb; and the ruin to the left is a reminiscence of the wondrous Basilica of Constantine."

"Large, colossal, and covering a surprising space (10 x 12), this fine work has been justly looked upon as one of the most important creations of the sixteenth century. It gives, more accurately than any other, the measure of the change which had been wrought in a Venetian painter by ten years' residence at Rome. Feminine beauty and luscious grace, color of rich sweetness, make place for scientific drawing, strained muscular action, marked anatomy, and realistic study of natural phenomena. . . . Melodious harmony of tints is sacrificed to powerful balance of light and shade, deep, decisive keys of tone, and a smooth modeling fused and polished to a faultless

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

enamel. In the very spirit, and perhaps on the cartoon of Buonarrotti, Lazarus winds his limbs out of the cerements. The Savior is formed and moves after the fashion of Michelangelo; the females are grandly shaped, and the kneeling Mary surprisingly foreshortened. Not one of these impersonations but strikes us by its force and solidity. Instantaneous action is rendered with lively realism; individuality, character, and expression mark the masks, the features and gestures. The science displayed is admirable, the labor bestowed, immense; but the inward charm of Raphael is absolutely wanting."

While *The Raising of Lazarus* must be considered the masterpiece of Sebastian, no doubt he would have been happier in the body of his work, had he followed Raphael rather than Angelo, for Raphael's style was far more like his own natural way of seeing and thinking. This is evident from the picture called the *Fornarina* which reminds so much of Raphael that it was long ascribed to his brush. Much the same quality is observed in the *Portrait of a Man in the Pitti*. In this portrait one sees the real Sebastian at his very best.

But he joined the faction of Michelangelo, and spurred partly by the spirit of competition with his opponents and partly no doubt by his leader, he produced abundantly for more than ten years. Then came the death of Raphael and an apparently open road to great success. But Adrian was elected pope and art was frowned down. Then the same Giulio de' Medici who had given the commission for the

## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

Lazarus was elected as Clement VII. Troublous times followed, culminating in the pillage of the city. Sebastian retreated to Venice, but so soon as matters became somewhat settled at Rome, he returned. Not long after, he was appointed "keeper of the seals", del Piombi. This sinecure allowed him to indulge a natural tendency to take life idly, with the result that he produced few works after 1531. His death occurred in 1547.

Lorenzo Lotto was born in Venice but spent much of his time in Bergamo, and other provincial cities. For a time, he was associated with Palma Vecchio, but clung so closely to the traditions of the earlier painters that he is quite unlike Palma. When the troubles with Charles V began, he settled in Venice, and became the friend of Titian and Aretino. Apparently, he never became a popular painter; he never received high prices for his pictures; he had time to execute pictures for Bergamo and other provincial towns. The number of his works is large, both religious and single portrait, but most of them are lacking in distinction. Some years before his death he retired to a monastery at Loreto, upon which he had bestowed all his goods in return for care to the end of his days.

His great altarpiece of 1516, painted for the church of San Bartolommeo in Bergamo, shows little departure from the old traditions. With the apse of the church as a background, the Madonna sits enthroned on a high pedestal while various saints stand round in adoration. Two angels are smoothing out a carpet before the throne; two others, a-wing, suspend the crown



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

above the Virgin's head; still others look down from a circular balustrade in the dome. Tho the angels are playful, the figures of good proportions, and the architecture correct,—all advances over much of the work of the Vivarini,—yet in composition and general effect, the picture lags behind its time. Giorgione had come and gone. Two years afterward, Titian painted the Assumption.

He was far more profound in his portraits than in his religious subjects. One that stands the test of long acquaintance and psychological analysis, and withal is most charming in color, is *The Three Ages of the Pitti*. In the fire of modern criticism it has been attached to various painters, including Giorgione. Certainly in this, Lotto shows that Giorgione's style was far from impossible to him. One is struck at once by the charm and power of the melting shadows that bind the figures into an intimate unity.

The types of character are extremely interesting. The youth in the middle has all the inexperience, the self-sufficiency, and the freshness of face that belong to the springtime of life, yet one must believe that he is an individual as well as a type. Manhood stands at the right. Kindly, thoughtful, cultured, he is a fatherly guide to a receptive student. The withering leaf is on the left. He never will take on the gold and crimson of the perfect autumn. Something of hardness and suspicion, the stings and bumps of life, have settled in the wrinkles of his face and stiffened the lines of his mouth. Naturally, he looks out at us; he has lost the power to be a naïve actor in a simple

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LOTTO: THE THREE AGES

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

scene where innocence reigns. In this work, Lotto is a very capable analyst of human life, a psychologist in the best modern sense.

Paris Bordone, tho a student of Titian, and one who, according to Vasari, most successfully imitated him, would be omitted from our list had he not left behind him one picture, *The Fisherman and the Doge*, of the Academy, Venice. It is an illustration of a Venetian legend which one must know to make the picture intelligible.

One night, while a heavy storm raged, a fisherman, tying his boat at the Molo, was approached by a venerable stranger, and offered a large sum of money if he would row the stranger over to San Giorgio. Tho the danger was great, the boatman rowed over in safety, only to be asked to take on a young man who met them, and row to San Niccolo. There a third joined them, and the fisherman was asked to row out toward the open sea. There he saw a ship loaded with devils, hastening in the harbor mouth toward the city. The three strangers made the sign of the cross. The ship disappeared, and the storm ceased. As the old fisherman landed his last passenger safely in front of Saint Mark's, he was told that his other passengers had been Saint George and Saint Nicholas (whose bodies lay buried in the churches of their name and who were patron saints of Venice); that the speaker was the great Saint Mark, who had saved his beloved city from destruction. When the fisherman protested that no one would believe his story, Saint Mark took his ring from his finger, saying, "Give this to the Doge".



## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

The next morning the fisherman told his story and presented his ring. Tho the locks had not been tampered with, the ring was missing from the treasury.



BORDONE: THE FISHERMAN AND THE DOGE

Then the doge knew that a great miracle had been performed by their patron saint. In gratitude to the fisherman, he was granted a pension for life.

Bordone has pictured the doge in state robes, seated as when he received ambassadors in the Col-

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

legio. With him are the stately Venetian senators, garbed for a grand pageant. To the left, the room has been opened into a spacious loggia that reminds us of the magnificent library of Sansovino. Into this august presence, the fisherman mounts the steps before the throne. His trouser legs are rolled up. He bends low, as he presents the ring. A retinue of gorgeously robed attendants fill the composition. In the foreground, the fisherman's boy and his gondola are conspicuous.

The Venetians loved pageants and gala days, bright colors and ceremonial pomp, as perhaps no other city of the Renaissance. Out of this spirit was born the work of Bordone, as fine a piece of pageantry as has ever been painted.

Bordone's picture was intended primarily as a wall decoration. Murals had become paintings in oil. The canvas was painted in the artist's studio, and then attached to the wall as part of a larger design. The old fresco painting of the preceding century was rare. It is noteworthy, therefore, when one finds a rather important painter still clinging to the old method. Pordenone was considered by his contemporaries as a rival of Titian. When the latter seemed to neglect his duties toward the state, Pordenone was nominated by the Council to do his work. He worked very rapidly and left behind him great walls in many of the towns in Venetian territory. Time has been unkind to them; in Venice all have perished.

Pordenone never settled in Venice; he came and went, one of a large number that always circled about the wealthy Queen of the Adriatic. It was but nat-

## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

ural that the great city should draw in, at least temporarily, the best of the provincial spirits, and keep them if the conditions were to their liking; or



MORONI: THE TAILOR

send them back to their home towns, to become the creators of better art there than would otherwise have been possible. There are many cities in the Lombard plain that developed important provincial art and artists at this time; Ferrara, Cremona,



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Parma, Bergamo, Brescia, and Verona among others. Brescia, for example, developed three or four fairly important artists—Romanino, Savoldo, Bonvicino or Moretto, and a student of the latter, Moroni. Moretto, perhaps the best of them, is seen to advantage only in Brescia tho a few good examples of his portraiture are found in various galleries. No doubt the favorite example of the work of this group is a portrait by Moroni, called *The Tailor*. It deserves its popularity, even tho it is in no sense profound. Its color is rich and its characterization is simple and dignified.

The city of Verona sent a most distinguished master to Venice, Paolo Cagliari, or Paul Veronese. He seems to have reached Venice about 1555, when he was twenty-seven. While quite unknown in the great metropolis, he had done a considerable amount of creditable work in Verona, Mantua, and other centers; and had made friends who believed in his future. One of these was the prior of the convent of San Sebastiano, who immediately obtained commissions for him in the sacristy and church of San Sebastiano. His success was immediate, and he at once rose to a place with Titian and Tintoretto. It was at Titian's recommendation that he was later employed in the Doge's Palace.

His first great picture was painted in 1563 for San Giorgio Maggiore. It was the *Marriage at Cana*, carried away to Paris by Napoleon, and still hanging in the Salon Carré of the Louvre.

It attracts, first of all, by its size, 20 x 30 feet, and by its lavish use of architecture of the most

CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN



VERONESE: MARRIAGE AT CANA

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

magnificent sort. Lofty columns and balconies rise on either side, and a high balustrade crosses the line of vision. Above this balustrade is a lovely sky, softened to the uses of a decoration, but yet vibrant with light and air. Below the balustrade, a great banquet table, in the form of an E, is surrounded with guests among whom are numbered Charles V, Francis I, and the Sultan of Turkey. At the cross of the E, in the very foreground is the orchestra, made up of the chief painters,—Titian, Tintoretto, Bassano, and Veronese himself. On the balcony, screened by the balustrade, is a bevy of servants engaged in the varied work of the feast. In the very center of the company sits the One who made the Marriage at Cana notable.

The company is so vast, the accessories are so rich and varied, the soaring architecture and the depths of sky are so splendid that Veronese felt that it was easy for the beholder to lose sight of the chief actor. He has therefore arranged his composition so that the dominating lines of vision pass thru the point where Jesus sits. Catch the rising curve of the figures sitting on the outside of the table; then those on the inside; then the oval of musicians. All these pass by His head. There is a curve that is started by the figures at the ends of the balcony, and that dips the line of vision in the same direction. The lines of the massive cornice on either side center directly on His face.

Notwithstanding all this effort of lines, Jesus is virtually lost in the multiplicity of detail. It is very evident that Veronese has loved the painting of all



## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

these accessories so much that he has forgotten that he was illustrating a New Testament narrative. There is no astonishment, no reverence, no gradation of emotion, nothing to make us think of Jesus as the Wonder Worker. Veronese has painted a great Venetian spectacle and has labeled it with a religious name. When Veronese repeated the offense at least three times in the next few years, he was finally summoned before the Inquisition for the picture, *Feast in the House of Levi*. Into this he introduced monkeys, parrots, dwarfs, drunken Germans, and a magnificent, flaunting portrait of himself. Pleading that he had not intended "to picture anything disorderly", he was set free on the promise to take out some of the offensive figures. So fully had the worldly spirit captured the time that Veronese was more popular than ever, even among religious bodies.

No doubt Veronese was honest. He was not irreligious. He thought of his themes as scenic, spectacular, decorative, not as Christian illustration.

With Titian and Tintoretto, Veronese suffered by the fire in the Doge's Palace, but fortunately years were given him to replace and surpass the work destroyed. The ceiling of the Collegio is his, one of the most gorgeous decorations of the whole Renaissance. In the oval in the center is Venice enthroned, and all about are allegorical figures of Peace, Industry, Happiness, and others. Rejoicing over the victory of Lepanto, the nobles look up from their balconies and adore. It is not a Madonna Enthroned with Adoring Saints; it is the spirit of civic pride and loyalty.

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In the Anticollegio, tho not painted for it, is the well-known Rape of Europa. It is most charming with its soft faded tints, its "azure" air, and its spirit of luxury and ease. The dramatic element in the story is forgotten in rich garments and elegant poses; the wail of Europa is far in the distance.



VERONESE: INDUSTRY, DOGE'S PALACE, VENICE

It is a great tribute to Veronese to be able to say that he understood the fundamentals of decorative painting, and practiced it better than even great masters like Raphael and Michelangelo. His murals are really architectural, and naturalism is subordinated to conventionalization. While he felt no deep religious impulse, even thought that religious enthusiasm was outworn, he is not decadent in spirit.

## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

He was interested in another phase of the painter's art and was earnestly trying to learn and apply principles that have stood the test of time. Had the prosperity of Venice continued, it is possible that the Decadence might long have been averted. Indeed, the last expiring flicker of Venetian genius in the



VERONESE: RAPE OF EUROPA, DOGE'S PALACE, VENICE

eighteenth century, the work of Tiepolo, was a reminiscence of the decorative style of Paul Veronese.

Tintoretto was born about 1518 and died in 1594. When, at seventeen, he left his father's dyes, he entered the studio of Titian. His temperament and methods of work were so different from what Titian, already nearly sixty, loved and practiced that the



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old master, after seeing a few sketches by the raw young student, unceremoniously dismissed him. Where and with whom he studied, we have no means of knowing; certain it is that he progressed. He studied Titian's methods and emulated his color. He heard of the mighty figures of The Tombs of the Medici, and imported casts of the best of the figures. True to the best that he knew, he adopted as the slogan of his studio: "The color of Titian and the drawing of Michelangelo". That certainly indicates a man of large mind.

It was no easy task for an independent painter, with little reputation, to get commissions. The older men controlled their distribution. When, therefore, his parish church of Madonna del Orto, newly restored, was unable to carry out any decoration, he offered to work for the price of the materials he should use. He painted so rapidly and with such enthusiasm that he soon gained the name of *Il Furioso*. His spirit is manifested in a stupendous picture of the Last Judgment, wherein he has placed a bewildering lot of figures, but the distinctive point in his conception is the relentless flood that carries dead and living bodies over the rapids, piles them up for a moment in an eddy before our eyes, and drives them on to an abyss.

Tintoretto was not greedy for money. Tho paying commissions came quickly, he did not forget his promise and at irregular intervals, he sent decorations to the walls of his parish church. Among these later productions is his Presentation. Titian's Presentation had been painted only a few years be-

## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

fore. It is a tribute to the teeming imagination of Tintoretto that, using exactly the same raw material, he was able to evolve a composition so different, and, in the judgment of many, superior. In Titian's, you remember the steps that cross the picture, and the old egg woman that fills an awkward space. In Tintoretto's, we look up and over the lofty curving fifteen steps. The design is certainly more beautiful and original than that of Titian, and the careful and accurate drawing of the gray and gold arabesques which decorate them is a labor of love. (One is reminded of the wonderful sectile mosaic of the Giants' staircase in the Doge's Palace.)

"The groups on these perfectly drawn steps could hardly be surpassed. There has seldom been a more touching picture of a child's unconscious and sturdy simplicity than that given of the little maiden, going to meet the great High Priest who represents her wondrous destiny. She goes up, gazing at him, more occupied in holding up her frock than in making any conventional gesture of astonishment. The two women who stand below are noble forms, drawn with a power and freedom, and a mastery of foreshortening that prove to what heights the painter had risen when he came back to finish his work. And here the management of light and shade is completely his own. Every effect is natural and inevitable, so that tho all important, we hardly know how produced!

"His method of calling attention to his principal personage is to place the latter, not in a conspicuous place in the foreground, but quite small, far away, while attention is directed to it by the spectators.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Here everything points and leads up to the childish figure, standing out against that space of blue sky which was so exquisite, when Ruskin first saw it, but which later was so shamefully overdaubed by a re-



TINTORETTO: PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN

storer. The light from the sky falls upon the stairway, but the left side sinks back into deep shadows. Within the shade are couched dim forms, such beggars as may lie along an eastern gate. The halt, the poor, the sick, how is the destiny of the child to affect them? Other enigmatical and doubtful forms may



## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

almost be symbolical of earlier prophets, wrapped in obscurity; but an old man springs up like a flash in the darkness, signifying that a dim intimation of a deliverer at hand has dawned upon the underworld of the poor and oppressed. We are sure that Tintoretto welcomed this chance of relieving the density of this part of his picture, but the presence of the figures is no empty conventional filling of space.

"The color is all in warm greys, golden browns, and rich creamy tones, with draperies of soft reds and purples. While all the actors are instinct with spontaneous feeling, the details are treated with precision. The hands of the woman reclining on the steps are exquisite, and the feet and legs of the one in the foreground are drawn with masterly simplicity, and yet no figure, however much it stands out, withdraws our eye from that small central one." (Adapted from Phillipps: "Tintoretto," pp. 39-40.)

In speaking of the Presentation, we have passed beyond the year 1548, when Tintoretto painted a remarkable work for the Scuola di San Marco, a Miracle of St. Mark. There was a legend of a Christian slave, who, because he persisted in his worship at the shrine of St. Mark in Alexandria, had been condemned to torture. Tintoretto places the scene in the city square. Atop a gate leading into the square are reclining statues suggesting a Tomb of the Medici. A crowd of Turks and Christians fill the space before the judge's tribune. Like an eagle from the sky, St. Mark swoops down, bursts the bands of his faithful disciple, breaks the handle of

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

the deadly hammer, and sets the spectators into a tumult of astonishment.

The suspended body of St. Mark is a wonderful study; the varied actions and body poses of the people seem quite unconscious; the light and air are very real; but the picture as a whole is not convincing.



TINTORETTO: MIRACLE OF ST. MARK

The dangling body can hardly be made sincere. The miracle remains unreal to a modern. But the picture shows highly developed technique for a man of thirty, or any man. The question remains, Can the impetuosity which animates all this be tamed? Have we here the spirit which works out good decoration? No doubt it was a very startling pic-

## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

ture to the members of the Scuola, but they came to like it and ordered other pictures, illustrating episodes in the life of St. Mark.

In 1560, Tintoretto received the greatest commission of his life, one which occupied much of his time for nearly thirty years—the decoration of the walls of the Scuola di San Rocco. He was already at work in the newly built church of San Rocco when the members of the Scuola asked some of the best painters to submit drawings in competition. On the day appointed, the drawings were duly displayed, except Tintoretto's. He had fastened a finished picture in the ceiling of the refectory. The other artists were both angry and astonished, and withdrew from the competition. Recognizing the excellence of the work submitted, the members voted the commission to Tintoretto. After some two years' work, he became a member of the fraternity and agreed to furnish three pictures every year. He received payment for seventeen years.

In the refectory where his first picture still keeps its place on the ceiling, Tintoretto did his greatest work. Opposite the entrance, on some thirty feet of wall, he painted *The Crucifixion*. One notes at once how completely the attention is centered on the Crucified. The empty space about his Cross, the masses of light and shade, and the directing power of lines are all employed to focus this composition upon one point.

Jesus is already on the Cross, and suffers with pain and thirst. Our feeling for Him and with Him is intensified by the group at the foot of the Cross,



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which at the same time gives body to the composition. It is a helpless, hopeless mass except for Mary Magdalene who stands and looks up. Mary the mother has collapsed with grief. The horror of it all is further heightened by the artist's management of the crucifixion of the thieves. He has violated



TINTORETTO: THE CRUCIFIXION, DETAIL

the sequence of time to drive the spear deeper into our hearts. By seeing what they go thru, we feel what Jesus has suffered. One of them is being bound; the other is feeling the pull of the body on the nail-pierced hands, and in another moment will cry with anguish as the cross drops into the hole. Tintoretto only spares us the driving of the nails. Back of the cross a donkey feeds upon *withered palm*

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*branches*. Only five days ago! And all about is the curious, gaping crowd.

Did ever a painter pile up the horrors of the Crucifixion as Tintoretto has done here? This comes so close to ugly naturalism that one, while admiring the power of the artist, rarely wishes to look repeatedly at the portrayal. So it is with most of the work in San Rocco. There is so little that is lovable, so little of simple beauty, that one who believes the mission of art to be the portrayal of the beautiful will find few pleasant memories connected with it. One admits the greatness of the artist while denying him a place in his life. One finds elsewhere, and of a later time, a Tintoretto that really charms.

For several years before the fire in the Doge's Palace, 1577, Tintoretto had painted for the palace; but this was all swept away along with Titian's in that disastrous year. Like Veronese, Tintoretto was able to repair the damage. His best work is found in the Anticollegio. There, by means of old mythical stories, he celebrated the glory of Venice in a consistent scheme of decoration. Without question, the best of the series is the Bacchus and Ariadne in which he suggests all that is meant when one speaks of Venice as "Queen of the Adriatic". Ariadne deserted, desolate, is crowned by Venus, while Bacchus woos her with a ring. In the background stretches the sea; from it comes her lover with his ring; Venus lifts her hand and extends her finger to receive it. Could any Venetian fail to recall the ring ceremony on the Adriatic when the Doge sailed out in the Bucentaur for the mystic marriage of Venice

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and the Adriatic? The ring is the center of attention in a beautiful radial composition.

Ariadne is not decked in royal robes, but nothing in her nudity offends or emphasizes the idea of sex.



TINTORETTO: BACCHUS AND ARIADNE

She is just a graceful human form whose beauty is enhanced by the very simple emotions which control the moment and action. Venus reminds of the swooping figure of St. Mark, yet one is not disturbed as in the Miracle of the Slave. Venus floats gently upon the air, quite as naturally as the butterfly, or a



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winged seed. Tintoretto seems no longer to be trying to dazzle us with his facility and the unusual.

In fact, there is no discord in this picture, nothing grotesque, nothing to offend. Even the strong lights and shades one finds in other works are here mellowed and blended. The color tones are few, quiet, and suffused with a golden brown that makes this an unusually attractive color harmony. If Tintoretto could only have left a few simple melodies like this, how much more the world would enjoy him! But this sort of picture was too near the idyllic. The idyllic, the romantic, the poetic, were not the fields in which Tintoretto's imagination chose to roam.

His most pretentious work was almost his last, *The Paradise*, in the Great Council Hall of the Doge's Palace. It is about thirty by seventy-five feet and occupied his hands for two years and a half. Tho it is not chaotic in composition, it is most bewildering. There are said to be more than seven hundred figures in it. It pleased the Venetians of the time, but it illustrates nothing for a modern. There is not a place where a weary mortal could rest his head; it is a whirl of circles about the Throne. A great picture of this sort must carry a universal message. It must be true in the twentieth century as in the sixteenth. Consider the simplicity of the last work of Titian or Michelangelo, and one gets a valuable contrast with the temper and art of Tintoretto.

Tintoretto required a passionate or tragic theme in which impetuous, even stormy, treatment would be appropriate. For one who deals in such themes, there is comparatively little hysteria or cheap melo-

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drama in his work; but his naturalism is too often unbeautiful, and his movement is quite inconsistent with grace and serenity and repose. He lacks finish, balance, harmony. Attempting to imitate his powerful treatment of mighty subjects, lesser men were guilty of all sorts of weaknesses and exaggerations. Tintoretto's work led straight on to decadence.

But we must not leave him without paying tribute to Tintoretto the gentleman. In a day that was grasping, when Titian was greedy and had as his close friend so unconscionable a rascal as Aretino, when the sanctity of the family tie was violated by the mistress, this gentleman never charged excessive prices, was strictly dependable in a business transaction, was very happy in his simple family circle, and his name was never smirched with scandal.

The greatest of the purely provincial painters of North Italy was Antonio Allegro, or Correggio, as he is commonly known. His work was confined to Correggio (a little town near Modena), and Parma, thirty or more miles away. In his boyhood, he visited Mantua where he might have seen the works of Mantegna. So far as is known, he never visited Florence, Milan, or Venice, tho it certainly was not poverty that prevented him. In Parma, he spent the best years of his comparatively short life. For some reason not quite clear, he left it in 1530, after having spent twelve years there, and retired to Correggio for what proved to be the last four years of his life. He was about forty years of age at the time of his death in 1534.

We are sure that Correggio was not widely known

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during his lifetime; we are fairly sure that he was not altogether popular in the narrow circle in which he chose to move. Certain of his characteristics must have provoked extreme differences of opinion, and it is quite possible that his departure from Parma was due to severe criticism of his work, particularly in the cathedral. Naturally he had little influence on the art of his time. Whatever there was only hastened the day of "the lean and slippered pantaloons", the shriveling of the fountains of inspiration for the Renaissance.

The general public knows Correggio only by his Holy Night of the Dresden Gallery. This is unfortunate, both because the picture has suffered much from travel and time, and perhaps never did represent the master at his best. It is founded on a story of the Apocrypha which tells us that Joseph once saw the body of the babe radiant with supernatural light. Its popularity seems to arise chiefly from this supernatural element.

The morning dawns; the night of the Nativity is almost past. Joseph is seen back in the shadow, tying his donkey after a fruitless search for better quarters, perhaps. The babe lies in his mother's arms, radiant with a light so strong and brilliant that a woman in front of the column puts up her hand to shade her eyes. She is plainly astonished. The grizzled old shepherd at the left is amazed at the source and brilliancy of the light. While mortals tremble and adore, angels float caressingly in a cloud over their heads.

One can hardly be sure of the chief interest Cor-



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reggio had in this composition. Measured by other works of the master, it is a study of lighting. The main source of light is from within, while a secondary is af-



CORREGGIO: HOLY NIGHT

forded by the coming dawn. It reminds one of Gerard Dou's interest in different sources of light in his Night School. Correggio was also interested, no doubt, in his new interpretation of the Nativity, wherein the miraculous was made the important element.

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It is unfortunate that public approval has selected *La Notte* rather than *Il Giorno*, *The Day*. This latter is better known as *Madonna with St. Jerome*, and is one of the chief attractions of the gallery at Parma.

The scene is laid out-of-doors. In the background, one sees the distant valley and low mountains, soft foliage and an ancient temple. The sky is hazy and warm. The Madonna is seated under a heavy crimson canopy. On her lap is a bright curly-headed boy, whose eyes are fixed on the pages of a heavy book. An upstanding old saint, who is identified by his lion as Jerome, supports the open book while an angel turns the pages. No doubt the book is Jerome's translation of the Bible, the vulgate. While Jesus stiffens his body and reaches out his hand after the pretty book, as any baby would, this natural eagerness carries a very beautiful, even profound symbolism. What the vulgate has meant to the Christian world and to the spread of Christianity is most happily suggested in the very natural action of the child Jesus. The supernatural is made reasonable; in the Holy Night, it strains our faith.

The figure of Mary Magdalene is worthy of special mention. She has as beautiful a face as any of Correggio's women, and her pose is unique in its grace and affection. Her impulse is to catch the baby up and whisk him away in her arms, but restraint stops her and mild melancholy spreads over her face, as she bends close. Then Jesus, in his eagerness to get the book, puts his little foot in her hand and catches his left hand in the gold of Mary's hair.

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CORREGGIO: MADONNA WITH ST. JEROME



## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

Self-control had its reward. You may remember that one of the distinctions of Ruben's *Descent from the Cross* is the delicacy of touch between Mary and the dead body.

For the moment she has forgotten her vase of ointment, but not so the little cherub at her back. He has found it, and lifts it inquiringly toward his nose. "This is precious ointment; I like its perfume."

If one looks for profound intellectual types in these people, he is doomed to disappointment. Neither here nor anywhere else does Correggio know anything about the world that lies beneath the human face. The deeply psychic he knew nothing about. The sensory apparatus of humanity, the flitting smile, the laughing eye, the soft shadows on the human face and distant hills,—these he did know and enjoyed to the full. With these we must be content; Correggio never went any deeper into the human heart than in this picture, and hardly covered a wider range of emotional life.

The *Madonna with St. Sebastian* is a similar picture, but quite inferior in composition and import. It has been extravagantly praised for its portrayal of child life. One has said: "Nothing can surpass the child beauty and grace of these charming figures whose gleeful frolic is the purest suggestion of happiness to be found in all art." One wonders what kind of a mood, what kind of a temperament, and what concepts of "gleeful frolic" and "happiness" one must have in order to be able to write in that way. More accurate is the further statement of the same author: "These creatures disport themselves as of old the fair-

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

ies flitted from flower to flower on a dewy morn in the childhood of the world."

Correggio was also a painter of myths. Seductive in color, glossing over with beautiful forms the sensual stories of Io and Leda, this art of Correggio is positively vicious. Apologize as the critics will for this kind of art, it always appears in the later stages of an art evolution, and shows the way to decadence. It is decadence.

There is a third phase of Correggio's art, his mural decoration. There are three important examples, all in Parma. The first of these was done for a private apartment of Giovanna da Piacenza, abbess of the convent of San Paolo. The motive for the decoration has been taken from the story and attributes of Diana, the goddess of chastity and the chase.

Over the hood of the fireplace, Correggio has painted Diana mounting her chariot for her drive thru the night sky. The crescent moon shines as a jewel on her head; behind it swings the mantle of night. Already the car is speeding on its way, swift as the stars and as silent. There is a softness of line and a delicacy of tint that make the composition most charming.

But the main decoration has been put on the ceiling. It is square, low-domed, divided by ribs into sixteen sections with slightly hollowed surfaces. All over this surface is a painted trellis. In each of the sections, an oval has been painted, so that we seem to look thru the trellis and the ceiling at the open sky. Above each opening hangs a luxurious bunch of fruit.

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In each of the oval windows, seated upon its edge, sometimes precariously perched, are one or more children. They are happy in actions that pertain to



CORREGGIO: ASSUMPTION, DOME OF CATHEDRAL, PARMA

the chase. One displays a stag's head; another has a bow and some arrows; another is playing with the hounds. The observer forgets the ceiling and has a very strong sense of the outdoors and the hunt. The fringe of this design, just at the meeting of ceiling



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and wall, is a series of shell-like lunettes in each of which is a symbolic figure, as Fortune, Purity.

It is significant of the worldliness of the time that the abbess should have chosen her subjects from Greek rather than Christian thought. At her death, these decorations caused the convent to be put under strict discipline. For more than two centuries they were hidden from the public.

While one is charmed by the vitality and innocence of child life, and by Correggio's success in opening up the ceiling to let in the spaciousness of the sky, one recognizes that the artist has violated the very fundamental of architectonics; he has painted away the ceiling. Painting is a decoration, and, therefore, it is fundamental that it must always subordinate itself in important ways to the thing decorated, the wall or ceiling.

Correggio seems to have pleased the connoisseurs of Parma, for he soon had a commission for the decoration of the dome of San Giovanni Evangelista. His theme is the Ascension. Again he refuses to regard his architecture. He paints away the curve of the dome and its enclosing form. He makes us think we are looking at an opening in the roof, around the base of which we see the apostles borne up on clouds, gazing at the figure of Christ disappearing in the light and air of the upper sky.

His third great decoration was for the dome of the cathedral. His theme here is the Ascension of the Virgin. The apostles stand around the base of the cupola and gaze at a sky filled with the hosts of heaven. Away up in the dome, they melt into the

## CONTEMPORARIES OF TITIAN

luminous ether and are lost. Farther down, the demands of foreshortening give us circles of faces whose bodies are lost in the crowd, and at the base, an enormous number of dangling legs and outstretched arms. It is the apotheosis of frazzled edges. Correggio has strained his mechanics for the production of an effect. The mechanical cleverness which started back in the convent of San Paolo has come to its perfect maturity. It started in lack of restraint, in violation of fundamental law, and it ends in multitudinous chaos. It has transformed a dome into a sky tunnel, at the base of which is a "fricassee of frogs' legs."

The finest art is that which makes a virtue out of a necessity. Recall those low angles of the east pediment of the Parthenon. How low angles cramped the imagination and technique of the earlier Greek architects and sculptors! But when they are filled with the chariots of the Rising Sun and the Setting Moon, how wonderfully they frame the whole idea of the Birth of Athena! From the farthest east to distant west, the messengers of the gods carry the news of the advent of Wisdom. Now Correggio, instead of refining, like the Greeks, the method by which a necessity could be turned to advantage, says "I am going to forget there is a necessity. We are not indoors; there is no ceiling nor dome; we will paint it all away and forget about it." In doing violence to so simple a principle, in so completely ignoring it, he not only missed a great opportunity for a refinement which his genius might have developed but he opened the way to all kinds of excesses. He himself became intoxicated with his own method.

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The fact is that while Correggio was a wonderful painter in many ways, he has all the earmarks of a decadent. His limitations did not arise out of his provincialism, his isolation from the great centers; nor did they come from his lack of dexterity. They are inherent in his attitude toward art and life. He had no understanding of the significance of life; purpose was never a mighty word with him; and therefore his art was never a serious matter. His age was dying and Correggio was not big enough to seize upon and exploit the vitality that remained. His world was always unreal, or at least sensory; it has the charm of color and movement in a fairy land of children and smiling adolescents. Sorrow and wailing are never heard. A profoundly purposeful face is unknown. The "ring of care" never cramps, and the call of duty is hushed. Starting with a world of the unreal, with no respect for truth and no reverence for universals, it is only natural that Correggio should have traveled the way of extravagance in technique and the grotesque in imagination. Tho he is admittedly a genius, with him the decadent spirit shows itself in complete control. More than any of his contemporaries, he foretells what was to be the future of art in Italy.



## PART IV

### THE DECADENCE

WHEN the fruits are fully matured and the sun daily sinks lower on the horizon, autumn is at hand. The heat wanes as the fruit ripens. Human impulse, too, warms until the fruit of attainment ripens. Then interest lags; impulse gradually loses vitality; autumn is at hand.

The great impulse of the Renaissance was the religious spirit, or rather its Christian form.] When this spirit had reached adequate embodiment, the summer of art is ended in Italy. It had produced the splendid Gothic cathedrals of the north and St. Peter's in Rome. It had produced the Sistine Madonna, The Last Supper, Titian's Assumption, and the Sistine Ceiling. New channels of expression in terms of nature and great philosophical symbolism had not been developed, and would have been meaningless to that time. The new channel of Classicism had been developed, but it had led straight to paganism, and of course the decay of the Christian spirit. It was but natural that decadence in art should set in.

## CHAPTER XVI

### MASTERS BORN TOO LATE

IN architecture, Italy had never really adopted the pointed arch as a structural unit; had rather employed the Gothic elements as decorative material. Brunelleschi's dome topped a poor Gothic edifice, and made clear that the Italian contribution to Renaissance Architecture would rise out of the Classic spirit and orders; that the great Christian temple of Italy would be inspired of the Classical. St. Peter's rose to embody that ideal. This Classical ideal which promised so much in the early fourteen hundreds had, in a hundred years, imposed itself as master. Principles had been enunciated and standards evolved which crystallized the style and prevented further development. While it was developing, the emphasis had been on structural forms; in the latter part of the fifteen hundreds, it turned to superficial ornament. Earlier, the age had been interested in individual initiative; it came to be interested in purity of style even to the point of love for the archaic; or if there was any originality, it seemed to be the product of a strained imagination, whimsical, spectacular, bombastic. The latter half of the sixteenth century was interested in hunting out old precedents and setting them up as infallible standards. Vitruvius, a late Roman writer, had been translated, and his dicta set the bounds of freedom for the architect and builder.

## MASTERS BORN TOO LATE

The two greatest masters of these later days were Andrea Palladio, 1518-1580, and Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola, or Vignola, 1507-1573. Both of them published treatises on architecture in which they lauded the Classical and fixed standards of purity. Tho the



PALLADIO: S. GIORGIO, VENICE

creative impulse was fettered and dying, a considerable amount of good work was done in their time at Vicenza, Venice and Rome. Palladio of Vicenza was the leading spirit. His influence upon later generations in the north was so great that they spoke of Palladian motifs and style. His most noteworthy achievement was an early production, arcades for the old Gothic town hall of his native Vicenza. Here



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he so perfectly worked out a theme, used earlier it is true, that it has gone by the name Palladian since his time. It is a large opening, spanned by an arch, with smaller openings on either side, using the lintel



VIGNOLA: VILLA CAPRAROLA, CENTRAL STAIRCASE

construction. In this case the central arch rises from an entablature that rests on secondary columns.

Palladio was hampered much by materials. He had fallen on an age less prosperous, where brick and stucco took the place of cut stone. With such materials, he had to be content in the great church designs of his later life at Venice. His San Giorgio and Il Redentore are very familiar sights to the traveler of

## MASTERS BORN TOO LATE

today. It is much to Palladio's credit that the necessity of using cheap materials in no wise weakened his sense of scale and correct proportions.

Vignola's work is in and around Rome. While he, too, was an academic purist, he shows another mark and tendency of a decaying impulse, the tendency toward the grotesque. He built the Castle Caprarola near Viterbo in the shape of a pentagon, with a circular interior court. He built a chapel in Rome in the form of a Classic temple, put an attic story on this, and surmounted it by an elliptical dome. He built a villa whose interior court was a half circle. Such work was said by his contemporaries to be original and picturesque; we know it was whimsical and capricious; lesser men that followed tried to out-do these eccentricities.

Amid the capricious hopelessness of the seventeenth century, a little good work yet appears. Bernini, usually most atrocious in his taste, built the curving colonnades that give St. Peter's the most stately approach of any church in Christendom. Longhena in Venice made a wonderfully charming addition to the magnificent ensemble of palaces along the Grand Canal when he designed the church of Santa Maria della Salute. The main body is octagonal in shape, surmounted by a smaller, well-scaled octagonal drum, on which rests a finely-proportioned dome and lantern. Of course there is over-abundance of decoration and a lack of structural sense in the application of it, but the picturesque quality is here tempered well with respect for tradition and principles.

There is little in Sculpture in this period that need

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detain us. It rises and falls with architecture. Bernini, bad in architecture, is also degenerate in sculpture. Two men, contemporaries of Michel-



LONGHENA: S. MARIA DELLA SALUTE, VENICE

angelo's later years, are worthy of mention. Benvenuto Cellini is interesting for his autobiography quite as much as for his sculpture. He reveals himself as a bundle of contradictions, a child of his times. He calls the English pigs and devils, and is



## MASTERS BORN TOO LATE

full of swagger and bravado. He seems to be sincere in believing that he had religious sanction for the most violent deeds, and that an omnipotent power directed his blows in his frequent quarrels and murders.

His bronze Perseus and Medusa has the same strong contrasts as his life. There is the delicate and subtle use of lines and shadows, and the ugliest moment in the whole story—the bony, mangled end of the spinal column and the gory head held up in full view. While one recognizes Cellini as a master craftsman, one also sees here the same spirit and the same conditions that produced the Laocoön in Greek sculpture—a lack of high purpose and a failure of self-restraint.

Giovanni da Bologna points for us one of the tragic elements in the influence of Michelangelo, tho the old master was no doubt spared the knowledge. He could not know how the means he had needed for the portrayal of the awful and sublime would be used by lesser men in a small way, often on petty themes. The colossal figures of the Sistine were necessary for a distance of seventy feet. The awful agony of Night and Day was legitimate, for Angelo was suggesting the travail and death of the great city, indeed of a civilization. When a Bandinelli or a Bernini used the same means in a desire for the spectacular, the result was disastrous. Giovanni, not as bad as these, tried mere bigness in his Hercules and The Centaur, and of course gave art a push on the downward way.

His most charming work, Mercury, shows its kin-

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

ship to the decadent spirit in its touch of the grotesque. The bronze is a slim nude with traditional cap and winged sandals. Tho not a muscular study,



GIOVANNI DA BOLOGNA: MERCURY

it is full of suggestions of activity; it really seems to be a flying figure. But for Giovanni and his time, this is not enough. He poises one foot upon a support of very solid breath that issues from the mouth of a cherub head. In so doing he clips the wings of his

## MASTERS BORN TOO LATE

suggestion and our imagination, and his flying figure never leaves the earth. Botticelli may blow upon his figures in *Spring* and *The Birth of Venus*, with no resultant harm to art, for all the strong forces of the time save it. When constructive impulses are already dying, one may not use such devices without revealing a state of decline and hastening its course.

Painting we have seen reach its full expression in the work of the great masters, and have seen evidences of decay. As in architecture, the seventeenth century was the autumn for painting, with some late flowers, also. It is worth recalling that this was the full summer for painting in Flanders, Holland, and in Spain.

The center of the best in Italy was the academy of the Caracci, three brothers at Bologna. Here the attempt was made to reduce to formulæ what had been learned about the methods of the great masters of the preceding century. Of course there had been bottegas where apprentices learned the usages of a single master, but at Bologna all the best usages were taught and systematized, and therefore the name *Eclectics* is given to the Caracci and their followers.

The most distinguished pupil of the Caracci was Guido Reni. He had first studied under a Flemish master, for, on account of wars and a certain prestige, some of the Flemings had found a congenial atmosphere in Italy. After studying with the Caracci, he found it advantageous to reside at Rome where he executed his two most famous works, mentioned later. Turning again to Bologna, he became the head of



## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

the academy, and had much influence on the latest development of art.

The *Aurora* is the freshest contribution that Reni made to painting. He has drawn upon pagan symbolism for the dawn and the flying hours. Apollo has mounted his chariot, and his dappled, fiery steeds are driving him swiftly on the highway of the clouds, over the shadowy earth and sea. Dawn, wrapped in swirling drapery, speeds ahead of the chariot, and



GUIDO RENI: AURORA

spreads flowers in the way. A cherub flies with blazing torch above the horses' heads. Happy, barefoot maidens, the Hours, dance about the car. The picture is full of movement, and yet it does not offend, by its dynamic power, the static quality of the ceiling in the Rospigliosi palace where it yet remains.

The *Ecce Homo* is another popular picture. Its appeal is quite dependent on external knowledge and moods. A crown of thorns and an anguish-stricken face stand for the story of the "man of sorrows." It is only a superficial interpretation, a portrayal of the physical pain of Jesus. There is no

## MASTERS BORN TOO LATE

suggestion of the failing of a great hope, the supreme sorrow of a broken heart. The material Jesus is here, but the spiritual was far too elusive and ethereal for the mind and hand of Guido Reni and his sophisticated age.

As the sentiment of the *Ecce Homo* is fairly obvious and commonplace, so the conception of St. Michael and the Dragon is pretty and sentimental. Is the dragon only a make-believe and the saint a paper hero? Or was this a terrific struggle between the elemental forces of destruction and construction? Perhaps George Gray Barnard's *Two Natures* fails as much by its ugliness as this does by its prettiness, but certainly Barnard has gone deeper into the fundamental truth.

The softness and sentimentality of Reni found its surfeit in Sassoferato and Carlo Dolci. The former filled the churches with soft-faced, tender-hearted peasant girls that he called madonnas; not without their charm, it is true, but without any possibility of maturity thru vision and struggle. Carlo Dolci's madonnas, also, are sweet and sentimental. St. Cecilia merely croons at her majestic organ. God himself leans out of the sky, like a sea-sick sailor. The age was flabby; its thought effeminate. It had fallen into an attitude of pity, pitying itself, pitying martyrs and saints, pitying Jesus and the Madonna.

In this gathering gloom, there was one last gleam of light; it was the work of the Naturalists. From one point of view, they were simply carrying forward the tendency that began with Masaccio, finding interest in themes that had nothing to do with the

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Christian story. But the Naturalist movement was also a protest against Christian themes, and the spirit of protest pushed the artist over into a brutal realism that is the besetting sin of naturalists in all times and all forms of art. Born where art has grown great under nature impulse, naturalism may lead to great



CARAVAGGIO: THE CARD PLAYERS

achievement, but born in Italy in the seventeenth century, it was doomed to an early death.

Caravaggio and Salvator Rosa are the most conspicuous masters of the movement. Rosa is essentially a landscape painter. On his canvas, nature is not sunny and peaceful; his delight is in gloomy valleys, wild hills, romantic human beings, and unbridled imagination. Caravaggio's work is well illustrated by his Card Players. Bright color emerges



## MASTERS BORN TOO LATE

from deep shadows. At a table sit two players at a game of poker (?). One is an open-faced, clean peasant lad. The other is dissipated, his hair is poorly groomed, a cheap feather decks his hat. He knows the days of full feeding and abundant drink, and the days of a gnawing stomach. While the innocent lad is studying his hand, a profligate confederate of his opponent is signaling with uplifted fingers. The innocent is in the hands of the guilty; the lamb is in the jaws of the wolf.

If one puts this picture by the side of Giotto's St. Francis or Angelico's Annunciation, it is easy to see the long road that art has traveled in two hundred years, and understand the gains and losses by the way. Giotto and Angelico were simple minded in that they were single minded. There was one dominating impulse, to paint for the glory of the Church and Christ. But truth came fast and in many new forms during the fourteen hundreds. Life was far more of a complex then than it had ever been before. The interests and enthusiasms of men had widened so rapidly that the old simple unity no longer seemed to include all. Men could not immediately make a satisfactory combination of new and old; it has always taken a considerable time to reduce a new complexity to unity. The old forms remained, but they were no longer vital; one interest seemed as important as another. Art had lost its prime function, and frittered away its efforts in many lines; or talented minds left it altogether and set out on a new conquest of thought and the physical world.

## THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ART

Tho night had fallen upon art in Italy, it had lived a full and magnificent life. It had builded magnificent churches for the glory of God and luxurious palaces for the enjoyment of man. It had made man in marble, forever denied action and words, yet having the power of a Hercules and eloquence of a Delphic oracle. Filled with tender devotion and blazing enthusiasm, it spread upon canvas the wondrous story of martyrs and saints, of prophets and apostles, of Mother and Son, in form that was dynamic and colors that thrilled.

There will never be a great Christian art again in the usual meaning of this term. Great religious art in our more complex age must be found in the revelation of the divine in our human life, in simple suggestion and profound symbolism. In the rapid movement of this tremendously big and complicated world, there has not yet been the possibility of a great synthesis of men's highest thought, as there was at the time of the Renaissance. If that condition ever comes, we may have a great movement comparable to the mighty movement that we call the Italian Renaissance. But the art of it will not be a repetition of the Christian story.

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## NOTES ON ITALIAN PRONUNCIATION

### VOWELS

|   |                  |    |             |
|---|------------------|----|-------------|
| A | has the sound of | a  | in father.  |
| E | “ “ “ “          | a  | in date.    |
| I | “ “ “ “          | i  | in machine. |
| O | “ “ “ “          | o  | in mole.    |
| U | “ “ “ “          | oo | in moon.    |

When two or more vowels occur together, they are pronounced separately.

Speaking broadly, each vowel has but one sound wherever it occurs. It is true that long and short sounds are recognized, but the differences are in length of time taken to pronounce them rather than in any change in sound quality. Before two consonants, vowels are regularly pronounced with shortened time.

### CONSONANTS

These are pronounced as in English except as follows:

C before e or i is soft, like ch in chat.

Ch is hard, like c in car.

G before e or i is soft, like g in gem.

Gh is hard, like g in get.

Gl before l has a sound like li in million.

Gn is pronounced like ni in union.

H is not pronounced.

J is pronounced like y in you.

Z is pronounced like ts.

In the case of double consonants, each must be sounded.

### ACCENT

The last syllable but one usually carries the stress. The exceptions must be learned individually.

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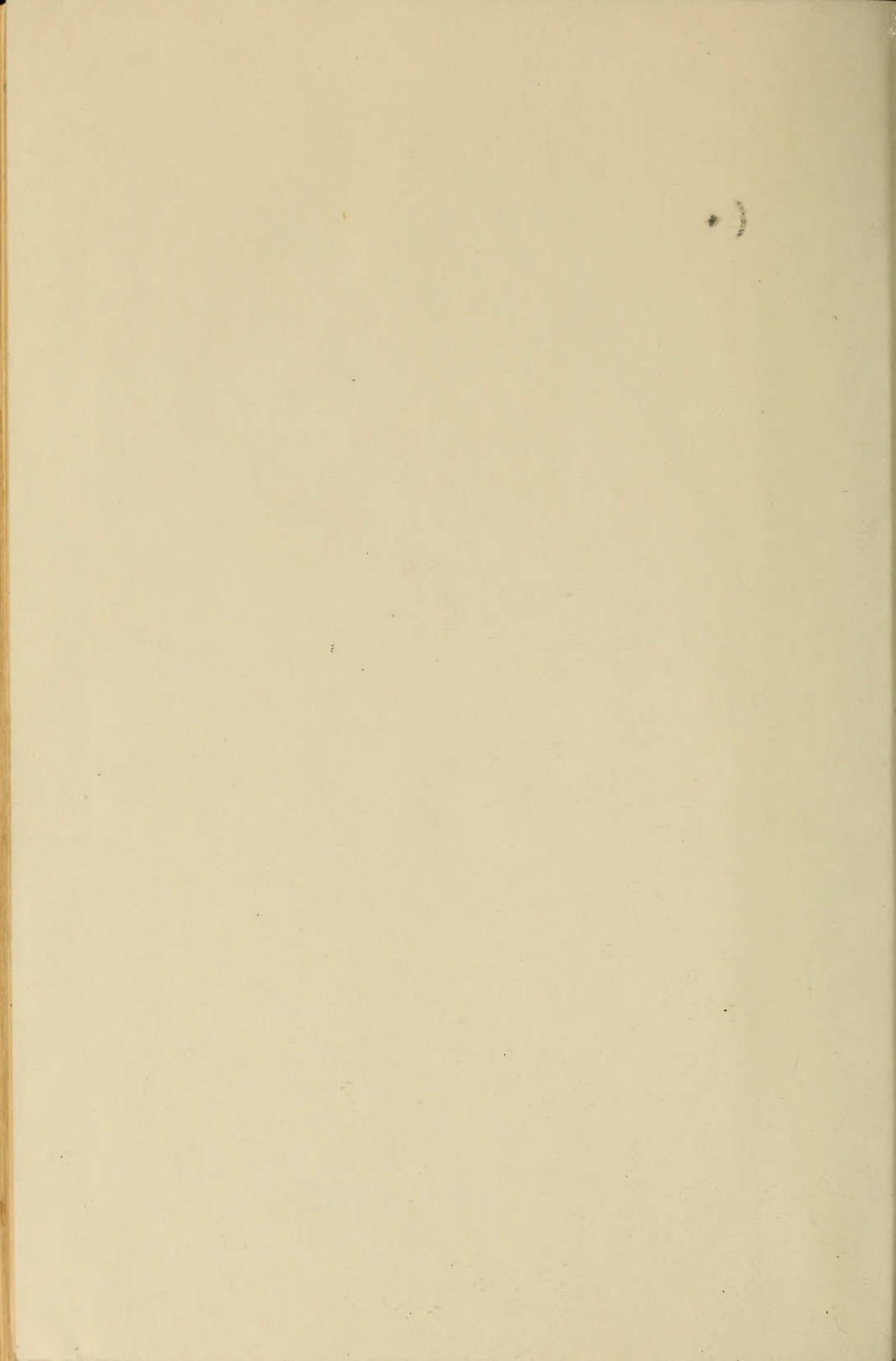




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